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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education
Organization of the Education Process

First Session, 34th Parliament
Tuesday, September 13, 1988

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

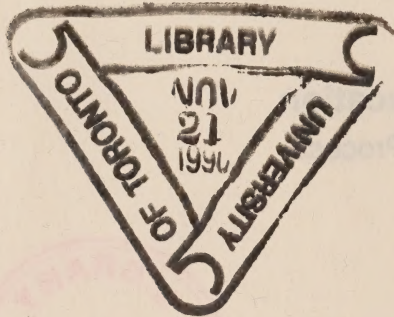
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, September 13, 1988

The committee met at 10:05 a.m. in room 151.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. Welcome to today's hearings of the select committee on education as we continue our look at the issues of streaming, semestering, OSIS and grade promotion, all aspects of the organizational process in education in Ontario.

This morning we had a fairly full agenda. However, we have had a cancellation from our 11 a.m. presenters who at the last minute were unable to make it. We are attempting at this moment to move up our 11:30 a.m. presentation. We will wait and see what happens in that regard.

Some members may notice that the seating is considerably different from the way it has been in past committees. The standing committee on the Legislative Assembly is looking at a new way of setting up our committee meetings to make them a little easier for members to see without being blocked by other members and easier for the members of the public.

This is one of the two setups. The other will be in committee room 1. Since our committee will be experiencing both situations, we may be asked for our input. If members note advantages and disadvantages to this particular setup, please keep them in mind for later discussion.

Our first presenter this morning is Sheila Morrison School. Would Sheila Morrison please come forward? Please be seated and identify yourself for purposes of electronic Hansard, then begin whenever you are ready. We have allocated a half hour for your presentation. We would suggest that perhaps you have 15 minutes for the presentation itself to allow time for questions.

Mrs. Morrison: I would like to clarify that I am not here representing the school. I am just here.

Madam Chairman: We apologize for that. On the agenda, we do have you down as the school, but we will accept the presentation from Sheila Morrison, person. Please begin whenever you are ready.

SHEILA MORRISON

Mrs. Morrison: Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to come before you. Probably all of you have copies, so you realize that I did not use any of those lovely, fancy words like "summative," "cognitive" and all those things, but I am sure you will be able to plow through the things that I say anyway.

The topic I chose was grade promotion, which I think is bound into all of the other things that come before the committee as well, but I think before the system gets bogged down any further in rhetoric and innovation and we end up with yet another credit course, this one called remedial English as a second language, it is time to look at how the system as it currently stands can be improved. As I understand it, that is what this committee is all about.

Since grade promotion should mean something other than the ability to move along with their peers, current practices should be evaluated. Expecting every child, even in grade 1, to be held responsible for his own learning, as per the ministry guidelines such as The Formative Years and Education in the Primary and Junior Grades, is absurd. Young children should not be burdened with making decisions that are going to affect the rest of their lives. We pay teachers to assume this responsibility.

Assuming young children cannot be taught until one knows what their problems are presupposes that all children have problems, which is patently untrue. To also declare unequivocally that 85 per cent of students who attend schools have problems is ridiculous, but this is the belief of many trustees who apparently receive their information from upper echelon bureaucrats. Most students do not have problems until they hit the school system.

Current methodology approves no formal instruction until grade 3. Instead, students are allowed to aimlessly discover via activities, while the teacher, however inexperienced, is expected to discover each child's learning style as he or she wanders or gallops from activity to activity. It depends on whether they are more interested in the sandbox than in the water table.

How this is possible in a large class—and all classes are large at this point, because we must accommodate special education, English as a

second language, French and so on—is beyond the comprehension of most parents.

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This next one I am really upset about. Ministry guidelines explain to teachers that inventive spelling is normal and acceptable, and they say in the guideline that teachers must be aware of this. Of course it is normal, which is why we send them to school to teach them what is acceptable. For years and years, students have been learning to read, write, spell and compute at a very early age with no visible damage being done to their psyches.

The newest wrinkle about to hit classrooms is peer evaluation, which, according to a communiqué I received recently from the ministry, is to be mandatory. Since almost every classroom in the country has a large percentage of youngsters who are below grade level, having them mark each other's work and evaluate it is an outright waste of time, tantamount to the blind leading the blind. Very few students have adequate skills, let alone superior ones, which would enable them to properly assess their own or each other's work. We pay teachers to teach these skills and evaluate how successful they have been in the job we are paying them for, not some immature, inexperienced kid.

The remedies: More structure—children need to know their limits—and specific guidelines, as in the little, old “grey book,” which tell teachers exactly what to teach in basic skills at each grade level. They should at least be exposed to it. Even if they do not learn it, they should be exposed to it.

It would also be helpful if someone told them how. It is utterly ridiculous for each board in this province to write its own guidelines, as they usually just ape ministry guidelines. Some, fortunately, are more specific, but not all. It is left to each individual school to interpret them. Think of the cost in time, in paper, in effort when teachers should be doing something else. Some of these people are not experienced—I know; I was in the system for years and years and years and I know how inexperienced some of the people are who are expected to write the guidelines for their courses.

Accountability: Surely it is not too much to expect teachers and principals to be held accountable for students' progress. There are not that many Einsteins or Down syndrome kids in each class for that to be a major hurdle. Most youngsters are average, even those who are so-called disadvantaged or of ethnic origin. At this point, it is much too easy to hide behind those

labels, which is no more or less than a copout. Test often and early, and not social skills; if they have lots of success academically the social skills will follow in most cases.

Evaluation: Evaluation should be an ongoing procedure from grade 1 on. What possible good is it going to be to wait until grade 6, when over half of the child's elementary school life is over, to discover then he is two or more years behind in his skills? Apparently they are going to test only reading and math. What has happened to spelling, writing, composition and punctuation? I will not even mention grammar; that is a no-no. Are they suddenly to fail?

Parents have been assured ad nauseam that there are no problems; the child will learn to read when he sees the need; leave books lying around; take him to the library; do all those good things.

One does not learn to read or write by osmosis. Those skills have to be taught and drilled over and over for the majority of students; or is the child promoted yet again to keep up with his peers and we provide remedial help again? Remediation should have started back in grade 1, when the teachers and administrators were busy pontificating about learning styles instead of teaching.

Remediation: Considering the emphasis on this aspect of education, is there some reason why educators cannot be as flexible as they say they are and, when a student fails to progress as he should, try something else? That is what people who are tutoring and we people in the private schools do.

With a good, effective program, most children should progress from grade to grade, so there is not the necessity to provide all this remediation. It is not enough to blame the lack of success on the influx of new Canadians. Previous generations of ethnic origin managed to learn to read and write fluently, with no damage to their personalities because they were taught and expected to learn. There are not nearly high enough expectations for any youngsters in the province at this point.

In a nutshell, if grade promotion is done properly, with high expectations of each child in each grade, if there is an effective program of basic skills at the elementary level in each grade and if there is a specific course outlined for each school across the province in basics, it would result in a certain accountability and mean job satisfaction for the teachers and an improvement in the public's perception of the school system. It would also take care of streaming, as all young people would have at least a working knowledge

of punctuation and sentence structure and would be reading at grade level, or nearer to it than those in the basic level now.

Surely the fact that there are 702 private schools in this province should indicate to officials that there is widespread discontent with school systems all over the province. The Shapiro commission recommended a satisfactory instruction level for all schools. That was some time ago, but nobody has moved on that. I think that is the most sensible recommendation that was made.

What about the home-schoolers? There are legions of those out there now too, and I understand that the ministry, in its wisdom, is going to set up satisfactory standards for the parents who are teaching their kids at home. They are not bothering with satisfactory standards for the school system, but just for the poor parents. I do not know how they plan to police that. They are not policing the schools very well, only the private schools; they certainly police me.

Parents send their offspring to school to learn to read, write, spell and compute. If they can do those things, other subjects will take care of themselves. Once those skills have been mastered, creativity will take care of itself, and you do not have to worry about their being creative. Everyone says they have to be creative. There are not that many Hemingways and all of those authors. Not everybody is going to be a writer, but they sometimes have to write reports when they get out of school. That is all I have to say.

Mr. Mahoney: Mrs. Morrison, I found your presentation interesting if not, to be frank, somewhat cynical.

Mrs. Morrison: Yes, I taught for 35 years.

Mr. Mahoney: Doing something for 35 years does not necessarily create cynicism.

I am interested, though, in your comments about children and their problems. I do not accept your premise that it is, to quote you, patently untrue that all children have problems. I think the vast majority of human beings have problems of one type or another at any stage of their existence. Those problems need not be negative, by the way. You can have a child who is gifted, who has specific interests, who has certain difficulties at home, who is having difficulty with a brother or sister, who might not be getting proper nutrition, who might not be getting proper sleep. All of these things, I am sure you would agree, affect a child's performance in school.

Mrs. Morrison: Yes.

Mr. Mahoney: There may be a personality clash with the teacher; who knows what the problems could be. I think it is not negative to presuppose that children coming into the school system have certain problems that need to be looked at, analysed and dealt with. The whole trend has been, and I heard a quote yesterday in one of the presentations, that we forget that children in our school system are dealt with at one time. What I think we have been trying to do is get children dealt with, instead of at one time, one at a time, which is a pretty substantial difference.

I wonder if you might expand on your comments and my reaction to them; the fact that I think kids do have problems when they come into the system and it is our responsibility, as people running the education system, whether we are legislating it or whether we are actually working in it, to try to identify those problems and put in place systems that will help them get through them.

Mrs. Morrison: Yes, I am quite happy to comment and talk back. What I am saying is there are too many schools and too many teachers. An inexperienced teacher is not going to be able to nail down those problems, first of all. Second, I do not think that we can go around saying we cannot teach him because he does not get along with his brother, because he did not have any breakfast, because he did not have this and this.

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Certainly, there are a great many youngsters in that category across the province, but I do not think they are in the majority. That is my point. They are not in the majority, but the assumption is that they are in the majority, that practically every youngster who walks in the door has a problem, so we cannot teach him until we have solved his problems. You can teach him at the same time. We can all do two or three things at once. That is what they are there for. I think a lot of the problems will go away when they have some success in school. Does that help?

Mr. Mahoney: I am not so sure it is not just rhetoric. Maybe we do agree that the problems are there; it is just how to address them.

Mrs. Morrison: Yes. This really upset me. I was at a meeting of trustees—this was a social evening—and we spent most of the evening battling about this. I feel you cannot just assume that every youngster who walks into grade 1 cannot be taught until you know what his problems are. You start to teach him and then you find out what the problems are. You do not

eliminate the teaching and say, "What are his problems; and his problems?" There are 25 youngsters. That was the message I was getting from these people and it upset me.

Mr. Mahoney: It may be the horse-and-cart scenario, to which you put first.

What is the size of your enrolment?

Mrs. O'Neill: I have a supplementary on that, before you go on. I find the statistic very different from anything I have been used to. Fifteen per cent is usually the generous label of the people who have exceptionalities.

Mrs. Morrison: I would agree.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is what the Ministry of Education in this province is using. Certainly, in determining special needs, that is the figure. I do not know whether some group in this province has got some other attitude, but it is certainly not the one upon which policies are made. I find the 85 per cent presumption as ridiculous as you do.

Mrs. Morrison: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think, really, what the ministry is projecting is certainly what you are projecting, that only 15 per cent of the people have problems that need special educational modifications.

Mrs. Morrison: I agree. What I am saying is that what the ministry is projecting and what is actually happening out there—I am talking about what is actually happening out there, not what the ministry is saying. I applaud the ministry. It is right. It is only 15 per cent. I think that is high, actually.

Mrs. O'Neill: I said generous.

Mrs. Morrison: Yes. But what I am saying is that that is not what is actually going on. I was sort of in the lion's den with that group because I was not agreeing with anybody. This was their whole premise, that 85 per cent of youngsters in the whole of the Metro area—obviously, it is Metro; I do not think it is quite that rabid out in the boondocks, shall we say, up around Barrie where I am.

Mrs. O'Neill: Be careful; a lot of us come from the boondocks.

Mrs. Morrison: I am out in the boondocks, too, remember. I am out there myself, and that was what bothered me so much. Unfortunately, what goes in Metro is catching, and I know it is spreading around. I get phone calls from all over the place and people are in the same state. That is what is bothering me. Is that okay?

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you for the explanation.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Mahoney, would you like to continue?

Mr. Mahoney: Sure. I am interested a little about your private school. It is rather fitting that its senior campus is in a wonderful community called Utopia.

Mrs. Morrison: That is not my sense of humour; that is the mailing address.

Mr. Mahoney: I know. I am interested in the enrolment and the size of the classes. Maybe you could tell us a little about it.

Mrs. Morrison: Yes, I can, and I am not here to plead for money for the private schools. That is not to say I am not interested, but that is not why I am here.

My maximum is 36. I have a ratio of three to one, when I can get teachers. I know you heard this morning that we are running out of teachers. We are. I had to go to the Maritimes to get teachers. It is a school for boys and girls with learning disabilities. The main reason it is three to one is because I have to have someone to sleep with the kids overnight. They have to have supervision. If you have tried to get help anywhere around, you cannot get extra people who want to come in just from four o'clock to midnight and sleep with them.

I know that is a high ratio. It is an excellent ratio, and that is one of the reasons for my success. Of course, there are a great many classrooms in this province that also have a ratio as good as mine. My nephew is up in Barrie and he has four autistic people with an aide, so that is better than mine. That is two to one; 16 to 20.

I give high school credits, which is the main reason I am inspected as thoroughly as I am—and I am; they visit me two and three times a year. I am not objecting. I am quite comfortable having the ministry inspect. I think it should. I think the ministry should be inspecting all the schools, not just the schools that give credits.

Mr. Mahoney: Do you feel that having such a good pupil-teacher ratio is something that is really within the expectations of a public school system?

Mrs. Morrison: No, of course not. However, I came out of the public school system and I did exactly the same thing in the classes I was in, and I had 16. It is not my ratio that makes the difference; it is the program. I do have a good program. It is very structured, very basic and down to earth, and I hammer basic skills in every single subject. They have to write history notes. They have to write science notes. There is none

of this filling in blanks and that sort of thing. It is my program that is effective, not my ratio.

The ratio does not hurt—do not get me wrong—and if we have really weak kids they get one to one every day if they need it. But I do get a lot of flak, because I could do it too if we had a ratio of three to one.

Mr. Mahoney: I have seen actual experience where that kind of ratio makes a tremendous difference.

Mrs. Morrison: It does make a difference, but I did it myself. I had 16 to 1 and I had the same kind of results I am having at my school.

Mr. Mahoney: Just in closing off my questions and comments, I agree with the statement on the top of page 3, "if grade promotion is done properly with high expectations of each child, in each grade...." At times, I do not think our expectations in our education system are high enough for our children.

Mrs. Morrison: I agree.

Mr. Mahoney: Yet I think there is a great danger of going backwards to the 1950s and 1960s, when those expectations were simply laid down. "That's it. You crack the whip, pal, and you learn this or you're in trouble."

Mrs. Morrison: Did you ever teach?

Mr. Mahoney: No, but I have been taught a lot.

Interjection: He never learned, though.

Mrs. Morrison: I could say something right now, but I will not.

Mr. Mahoney: As I said yesterday, grades 8 and 9 were the happiest four years of my life.

I would just be concerned that we not be too simplistic in setting high expectations. They should be high.

Mrs. Morrison: Better than none.

Mr. Mahoney: I have high expectations for my own children, but I also have the realization that those children have problems. That is maybe where I am coming into a little bit of conflict—not serious conflict, because I agree with much of what you say. You have to tie in those high expectations with the realization that children have problems. If you teach learning-disabled kids, you certainly understand that.

Mrs. Morrison: A great many of my kids are educationally handicapped more than severely disabled. Even the boys and girls who come to me out of grade 9 and grade 10 are not reading beyond grade 5, and their spelling and writing skills are simply atrocious. This is why I am really annoyed. In this big deal we are now going

to test, in grade 6, reading and math. What is wrong with testing spelling and writing and all those other good things? They are not mentioning that and I think those are important things.

I also find it incredible that every single school in the province sets its own standards. Not everybody is as gifted as some. We have good principals and we have good teachers, and they are really working very hard. As you can see, this is dear to my heart.

I met a young man one night. I was skating and he trailed up to me and said, "You are a teacher." He knew who I was, of course. He said, "I teach grade 5." I said, "Oh, isn't that nice." He was a nice young guy. I said, "How many students do you have?" He said, "I have 32." I said, "Fine, and how many can read?" and I laughed. He looked at me and he said, "Seventeen can't." I said, "What on earth do you do?" I knew. The poor man is floundering. You talk about these teachers' case loads. They are right. I do not knock teachers. What can anybody do with 17 kids who cannot read in a class of 32? He said, "Well, some of them go out for half an hour, some of them go out for an hour and I do the best I can."

How did they get there? They are 10 years old in grade 5 and they are two or more years behind in their skills. This is not an exceptional young man. He was very concerned and dedicated and I was impressed. This is far too common and I think this evaluation is really important. It is time some guidelines, some specifics, were set down.

Fine, let them have a good time. I taught. Granted, I am sure you realize I must have been a bear, and I was. But the kids liked me. I do not care what: as long as you are fair, you can get away with anything. I was fair. They learned. That is what I am trying to say.

1030

Mr. Mahoney: That is right. That is the policy of our government actually, as long as you are fair.

Mr. Reycraft: That is what the Premier says.

Mr. Jackson: We know you are getting away with everything.

Mr. Mahoney: Eat your heart out.

Mrs. Morrison: And then you have people like me coming along.

Mr. Villeneuve: I see my colleague, Mr. Mahoney, is still wearing his political hat from this morning on the CBC.

I find your presentation most interesting, particularly the comment where you seem to indicate that some of the 700 private schools in this province are more closely policed, possibly,

than the public or separate system schools. Could you elaborate on that a little bit?

Mrs. Morrison: Yes, I certainly can. Any school that gives high school credits is inspected by the ministry, once, twice, maybe three times a year. The public schools, and I was there a long time, have no inspectors. They are supposed to police themselves but they do not. During the last eight years I taught, I had one visit from the principal. I had no visits from anybody else. This is the way. You ask anybody. Ask some of the teachers who leave me. Not only do they have inspections from the ministry at my school, they also have me. I am up there every week. I am much stricter than most of the inspectors because I have certain standards.

They are teaching all over. One of them is a vice-principal up in Elliot Lake. Another one is vice-principal in Barrie. Another one is in Banting. Not one of them has ever had any inspection or the principal in his room. This is commonplace. You make some inquiries. That is it exactly. Nobody is inspected in the public or separate schools.

Mr. Villeneuve: That is a most interesting observation. Would you include in that—I am sure you are aware of it—the Christian schools which operate basically in tandem with the separate and public system? Would they be subject to pretty well the same rules as your school has been?

Mrs. Morrison: If they have high school credits. If you do not give high school credits, you are not inspected. I do not agree with that either and I tell them so. Basically, they do not have the personnel. Maybe they have not, but they should have personnel because at this point anybody can open a private school. You send them a memo saying, “I am opening a private school with five kids,” and you are in business. You do not have to have any qualifications. You do not have to have anything. I just do not think that is right.

I run a good private school. I am inspected and I am proud of it. There are a lot of good ones, but there are a lot that are not so good. I think the ministry should be in there doing something about them. Talking about supervising the poor home-schoolers; that is why there are home-schoolers, they are not happy with the kind of instruction they are getting.

Mr. Villeneuve: Where did we run off the rails? It is costing us an arm and a leg to run our educational system. In your opinion, when did all this start going in every direction all at once?

Mrs. Morrison: When they suddenly decided that youngsters could decide for themselves what they wanted to learn. That goes through all the ministry guidelines. The children must be encouraged to take responsibility for their own education. I think it is outrageous to put that kind of burden on a kid who is six, seven, eight, nine and so on.

You let them do what they want to do, which is what they are suggesting. What can you expect when you get them into grade 9? They have been doing it. What do you expect when they are out in the workforce? They have been allowed to do what they wanted all this time. I feel sorry for high school teachers because those people are getting all these kids in there who have not had any structure, who do not have any punctuation skills. They cannot write a letter. They cannot write a sentence.

When my own kid was in high school I charged down to Lawrence Collegiate, as you can imagine—Mr. Mahoney there can see me charging down, can he not? I said, “How come he is not writing any essays?” He wrote two essays all the way through high school. I know because I typed them. The English teacher said to me, “But, Mrs. Morrison, they cannot write sentences.” I said, “Teach them how to write sentences.” She said: “We do not have time. We have to follow the course.”

I have a private school. Every one of my teachers, when I have been able to hire qualified teachers, has two degrees. They have a bachelor of arts and a bachelor of education. I would not dare send home the report cards without checking them for language and spelling. These are teachers who have degrees. I would not let them go home without it.

Mr. Villeneuve: On that observation, I think I will terminate my questions. It was a most interesting presentation.

Madam Chairman: Just before we go on to Mr. Reycraft, I find your comments quite fascinating but quite frankly I cannot relate to them. I have children in grade 5 and in grade 8. They have had regular spelling tests. Their sentence structure is corrected. They seem to be getting a lot of these grammatical skills taught to them which you are alleging are not taught in the public school system. They are in two different schools, so I cannot believe that it is just an anomaly, that one particular school is emphasizing this.

Mrs. Morrison: No, it is not. I agree.

Look, I did not say—I am not blaming—there are certainly all kinds of pockets of instruction

out there where teachers are doing a good job in spite of themselves. They really are doing a good job. I am not questioning that at all. I do not think it hurts to have people know that your mother is an MPP either.

Madam Chairman: Well, that has only been for 10 months and I am afraid their education was in place long before I became an MPP.

Mrs. Morrison: Okay.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: A four-year window; that is not really worth talking about.

Mr. Mahoney: Boy, you are snarky this morning.

Madam Chairman: That is right. I am anticipating their grades will drastically improve over the next four years.

Mrs. Morrison: I hope so too.

I am not blaming teachers. There are some good teachers out there and they have probably been around. I really do not blame teachers. I really am blaming the Ministry of Education, because I think it has abdicated its responsibility in not being more specific, particularly to inexperienced teachers. They are not telling them how. They go off and they take these—these teachers knock themselves out; they take courses in special education.

I know five of my teachers drove from Lefroy to Toronto all winter, three winters in a row, to get their specialist in special education. I said, "Have you learned anything?" I thought, "Pass it on to me, for heaven's sake."

The first night the man said, "Where are you all from?" So they told him. Each of those teachers, five of them, had to take a night and tell what we did in our school. For five nights they did not do anything except listen to what my—and then what all the other teachers did, so that was how many nights? Several nights out of that. Then they had to write up what they did with certain students in the class. Again, that was me telling them or somebody else telling them.

They did not learn anything about what to do. You walk into this class and you have a whole bunch of kids who cannot do this and this, and what do you do? They gave them theory; "You can tell a learning disability because he reverses letters," and all sorts of things; but they did not learn very much, and I think that is sad.

Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Just before you go, Mrs. Morrison, I think Mr. Reycraft has one final question.

Mr. Reycraft: First of all, Mrs. Morrison, I took my specialist courses in special education in

the late 1960s and early 1970s. I can tell you that in those courses I learned a great deal about how to educate young people with learning exceptionalities, and I applied that for a number of years in both elementary and secondary schools.

I cannot accept most of what you are saying. I cannot accept the fact that generally secondary school teachers, secondary school classrooms in this province are unsupervised. That is not the case. They are supervised by principals, by vice-principals and by department heads. Teachers receive a great deal of assistance from those individuals. To suggest that is not the case, Mrs. Morrison, quite frankly, I cannot conceive to be based on any kind of fact.

You also suggest in your presentation that if we could somehow go back to the world of the little "grey book," the old curriculum guideline that we had in the elementary schools of this province, all the difficulties children have in learning how to write and speak and communicate and compute would suddenly disappear, that we would end up with a sort of structured system in which a common guideline was followed by all teachers in the province. That is ridiculous. That was not the case when we worked under the little "grey book." There was a great deal in that guideline that was extremely general; and even then school boards and individual schools across the province developed their own curriculum guidelines—

Mrs. Morrison: That is right.

Mr. Reycraft: —and followed them with a great deal of success.

Mrs. Morrison: That is what I am saying.

Mr. Reycraft: Obviously, you want to react to some of that, so I will stop.

Mrs. Morrison: I do not agree with that, because I was there, the same as you were. I took my special ed before 1972, but since then—these teachers I am talking about were going in 1978, 1979 and 1980. They are the special ed people I am talking about now. The whole thing is much less structured.

But I am agreeing. Certainly, it was not perfect before, but it was something for an inexperienced teacher to latch on to and say, "Okay, what am I going to do?" Now they do not know. They do not know what has gone before and they do not know what has come after. I think, Mr. Reycraft, if you go around, you will find there are a great many people who have not seen a principal or a guidance counsellor. Unless they are in real trouble, they do not see anybody. Most of them

do not see anyone. I will stick to that because I know I am right.

Thank you very much. I should not come here and fight with the politicians, should I? I do.

1040

Madam Chairman: Just before we go to our next presenter, I would like to thank you, Mrs. Morrison, for coming before us.

Mrs. Morrison: Really?

Madam Chairman: Yes, definitely.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Caffeine; we need this sort of start.

Mr. Mahoney: That's right.

Madam Chairman: While all the members may not necessarily agree with every point you have made, you certainly have stimulated the conversation and also the thought-provoking task before us, and we really appreciate what you have put into it.

Our next presenter is Ted Shiner. Would you come forward? Thank you very much for appearing before us, particularly on quite short notice, since you were on the waiting list. Mr. Shiner has given us a brief, which was distributed to you by the clerk this morning and is before you.

Mr. Mahoney: I have the brief, but I am following this agenda.

Madam Chairman: The revised agenda has Mr. Shiner. Our previous deputant was unable to appear, so late last week the clerk revised the agenda.

Mr. Shiner, we have allocated a half-hour to your presentation and questions, so if you could perhaps keep your remarks to approximately 15 minutes or so, that will leave us sufficient time for questions from the members. Would you identify yourself for purposes of electronic Hansard and begin whenever you are ready.

TED SHINER

Mr. Shiner: My name is Ted Shiner. I am appearing as a private citizen. However, for the benefit of the committee, to sort of put my comments into perspective, I have included a brief bibliography on the last page of my presentation. Briefly, I am married and a parent. I have a daughter who has just entered university and who has gone through the public school system and a son who is in elementary school at the present time.

My interest in elementary and secondary education really became current when my daughter entered kindergarten and I started to

become active in the Home and School Association and went on to the Durham Council of Home and School Associations. As past president, I served on the educational committee as chairman. Our unit sponsored a number of resolutions to the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations. Interestingly enough, most of them happened to deal with funding: pooling of assessment, funding of education and capital funding. We have also co-ordinated a number of discussions and presented a number of briefs, including things like the Radwanski report and the secondary education review project report.

In addition to that, I served on a number of board of education committees; for example, the committee on SERP. When that came out they were studying it. Our board did an internal-external evaluation about eight to five years ago now. They invited the public to serve on that committee. I volunteered and happened to chair the finance committee for them.

I was also asked to be an external member on an evaluation team that evaluated my daughter's high school. In addition to that, I have spent the last 20 years at Durham College where I am a teacher. That puts things in perspective.

With regard to the streaming of students by ability, streaming of students by ability in both secondary schools and post-secondary institutions is both necessary and fair. Students have different abilities and needs. Streaming merely recognizes these differences. It is unrealistic, even with a large amount of remedial work and special support, to expect academically weak students to keep up with academically bright students. It is equally unfair to expect bright students to remain interested in a class which does not challenge them.

Combining students with vastly differing abilities is sure to exacerbate an already high dropout rate. Students do not drop out because they are in the general-level program and cannot go to university; rather they are in the general-level program because their academic abilities and interests are lower. It would be cruel to return to the undifferentiated classroom where they would be continually reminded that they are at the bottom of the class. Advanced-level classes already contain a wide range of abilities. Some students in these classes lose interest because the pace is too slow for them. The present system of allowing students to take some advanced-level and some general or basic-level courses goes a long way towards meeting the needs of those students who are weak in only one or two areas.

This does not mean, however, that the present system cannot be improved. Indeed, it can, and it should be improved. If general-level students are dropping out in large numbers, then the school system should be looking to improve general-level courses. They should have smaller pupil-teacher ratios. They should be taught by the most skilful teachers. The students in these programs should be required to take only relevant courses, and the course content should be reviewed to ensure that it is relevant to their needs. Programs should be put in place to assist any student who, after completing a general-level course, wants to attempt the advanced level.

In the Durham region, we have two schools that operate primarily at the basic level. They have proven themselves to be worth while by satisfying the needs of most of their students. The fact that not all of their students graduate does not diminish their success. It is doubtful that many of these students would have graduated in a traditional high school. I might add at this point that a few years ago I was invited to attend one of these schools. There is no doubt in my mind that the teachers and the students in this basic-level school are very confident that what they are doing is both useful and productive.

Grade promotion: I tend to agree with those who say that except for those individuals who are immature, elementary students will not benefit by repeating failing grades in elementary school. It is up to the school—and by “school” I mean not just the classroom but the whole school situation—to provide whatever support is necessary to students so that they can keep up with their age group. It is not possible nor advisable to provide all the support necessary to keep all high school students in a homogeneous age group; hence, the necessity for streaming students according to their abilities and interests.

Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions: The introduction of OSIS is basically an improvement on the previous system. The elimination of grade 13 is appropriate. In most cases, the elimination of many of the spare periods which students had is also good. Students may now finish high school in four years, but some will take four and a half or five. Previously, many students took six years to finish up to grade 13.

OSIS allows for a mix of compulsory and optional subjects. This benefits the students as long as they get good guidance assistance when they select these options.

OSIS is not perfect. There are many problems that could and should be improved with some

fine-tuning. Some topics which are important for all students are included in subjects that are not compulsory. For example, certain health topics might be missed by those students who do not take physical education in grades 11 and 12.

Students tend to take mostly compulsory subjects in grades 9 and 10. As a result, they miss optional subjects which, for many of them, would have been advantageous. The technical subjects, particularly, have suffered under OSIS. This area of technical subjects in high school being on the decline, I think is a serious problem that definitely will have to be looked at.

If Ontario industries are to remain competitive, then science and technical courses must be upgraded and made more meaningful. This will include upgrading both labs and shops. In addition to technical subjects which start in grades 9 and 10, other courses should be designed for those students who wish to start technical subjects when they are in grades 11 and 12.

I think one of the problems with the technical is that because they take the compulsory in early grades, by the time they are interested in the technical they are in grades 11 and 12 and they do not want to start taking a technical course that is geared to the grade 9 level and in which some of the students will be at grade 9. So we have to gear courses for these students who start later.

These subjects should be offered in both the advanced and general levels. It is wrong to assume that only general-level students would benefit from a technical course.

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Semestering: Semestering was introduced in many high schools because it provides more flexibility in timetabling the various course options. It allows a student to finish a subject after half a year and take a related subject in the second half of the year. Although it has some problems, it is probably necessary. Students for the most part prefer semestering; teachers do not.

I have taken a bit of liberty here and included two topics which I feel particularly strongly on.

The first of these is an overall vision of education for Ontario. It is necessary to develop a co-ordinated overall vision of education for Ontario. This does not appear to exist at the present. By “overall,” I mean elementary, secondary, colleges, universities, apprenticeships—the whole, overall program.

The Ministry of Education educates elementary and high school students without a clear picture of where they are going to use this education. The Ministry of Colleges and Univer-

sities does not have a clear picture of which students should go to universities and which should go to colleges. The Ministry of Skills Development is responsible for such programs as the apprenticeship program. Many students do not go on to any post-secondary education.

An example of the confusion which exists between various levels of education is the role played by the colleges of applied arts and technology in the province. I think I am showing a bit of bias here. Most of these colleges offer very diverse programs ranging from such programs as Futures and English as a second language to such specialty courses as computer-aided design/computer-aided manufacturing and fibre optics, which are offered directly to practising engineers from industry. Yet the Ministry of Education and many high school teachers and guidance counsellors see universities as the only acceptable goal for their advanced-level students while the colleges are saved for the general-level students.

The colleges do provide programs for most general-level graduates. However, many of their programs are more suited to advanced-level graduates. This confusion in role has meant that many students desperately try to get into university while more appropriate college programs remain partially filled.

The last topic is quality assurance in education in Ontario. At the present there is a high degree of quality education in Ontario. However, there is no guarantee that this high quality is uniform in all grades and all schools in the province. As taxpayers and parents or students, we have the right to expect consistent high-quality education in every classroom in the province.

Consider, for example, the consequences if a class receives an inadequate mathematics experience for one or two consecutive years. This is especially acute if it happens in elementary school. As mathematics builds on previous work, these students will probably never catch up. They will merely assume they are just not good at math. Their future options will be severely limited.

It is important to remember that the success of the learning experience depends not only on the teacher but also on the school, the home, the community and the environment in which the student studies.

But before corrective action can be taken, we must know that the problem exists and to what extent. The school system should be measuring its success at all stages, from kindergarten to post-secondary. It is ironic that the school system

is willing to give a student a test to decide if he or she will pass or fail but is not prepared to use a similar test to decide if the learning experience has failed the child.

Continuous quality assurance, not unlike that being adopted by North American industries, should be applied to schools if they are to ensure that they are providing a uniform, high-quality education to all students.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yesterday, I was trying to get some information from the ministry, which we hope will come soon, around OSIS figures and just how many kids are fast-tracking and how many are not.

On page 3, you assert that many "students may now finish...in four years but some will take four and a half or five." Anecdotally, it was suggested that in fact five years is more the norm and that four and a half seems to be the speedup. You then assert that "many took six years to complete up to grade 13" in the past. I wonder if you have some figures that this is based on, or is that something we should be asking the ministry for?

Mr. Shiner: I think it would be interesting to get the figures on it. I do not have any readily available.

Back in the dark ages when I went to secondary school, that was very common. I know that in the recent past it has been very common for students to take summer courses to get credits to allow them to graduate, which I guess is extending the five years, not by a whole year but by some.

I am not saying it is necessarily bad, and I am not saying that five years for the present is necessarily good or bad. I think the present is probably less, that the students would now be spending at least a little bit less time in high school than they did in the past.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It was just that yesterday it was anecdotally asserted that many bright kids in the past actually did do it in less than the five years, by taking extra courses, etc.

I wonder if we could get from the ministry, if you can request it, Madam Chairman, some information about the profile of average lengths of time that have been taken to get high school diplomas or grade 13 in the past. It would be interesting to compare what figures we get from the OSIS figures they are going to come up with on the past practice, what sort of percentage of kids actually took six years to get their grade 13. I would be interested to know that, if we can find out.

Madam Chairman: Certainly.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would not want a day to go by without asking for something from the ministry. It would be upsetting to them if I did not send them a chore of one sort or other.

I also found important your comments on trying to make technical subjects more appealing at grades 11 and 12, because of what has happened with OSIS. I think that will become a focus for us in the next little while.

You make a very strong assertion about streaming, that it is absolutely necessary. I wonder what you base that on when yesterday, for instance, we had representatives from the Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board in here who basically said they do not believe in streaming, do not use it and in fact do not even use much withdrawal of students with learning disabilities from a particular class but try to do everything within the class and seem to be, as far as they were concerned, having great success with it. I find that in this whole discussion there is a lot of rhetoric on both sides, about the dangers of streaming or that in fact it works wonderfully.

I am wondering on what empirical evidence you base your comparison, for instance, of its usefulness to a basic school in your own area, given what Wellington county and Waterloo county and the Hamilton separate boards have now been trying to do, which is to have no streaming for the last while.

Mr. Shiner: The basic level is another situation. My experience basically is that I have taught at a community college for 20 years. In that time, in most of those years, I have taught in both the technician program and the technology program. The technician program, for the most part, draws its students from what is currently the general-level stream; it used to be the four-year stream. The technology program, for the most part, draws its students from that part of the advanced-level stream which did not go on to university and decided not to go to grade 13, which used to be the five-year stream.

In that time, I can say there has been a difference between these students. They both work hard. If anything, the technician students tend to work harder. But there is a difference in their ability, there is a difference in their approach to the subject, and there is a difference in how you have to approach the students.

Right now, in the technology stream, for example, we have a broad range of abilities, and it is difficult to teach them because of this broad range of abilities. I certainly would hate to have to teach them and the technicians at the same

time. I think I could do both—I have done both—but I would prefer to do them separately because they are different.

1100

I know that Radwanski, for example, really stressed the idea of eliminating the undifferentiated groups, but I do not think it will work. I think if there is a problem with general-level courses in high school, and I suspect that there is, then they have to be improved and made more relevant certainly with general-level students. I think the size of the class is imperative.

It is very difficult, for example, to keep these students quiet. At the same time, they are more alive. They seem to be more interested in a variety of subjects. But if you put a large number of them together in one group, you are not going to be able to get to the course material that you intended. It is things like that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: People found that with me in the five-year stream, which I am sure does not surprise you. But I just suggest to you that before we make definitive statements about these things, we should look at the fact that different systems are doing it differently. Nobody says that everybody is the same or everybody's aptitudes are the same, but the methodology of ability grouping and streaming has proponents on both sides. There is evidence on both sides.

I just want to make one thing clear. When you say that you want the courses to be relevant for the basic levels, that does not mean that you want people outside the basic levels to take irrelevant courses, do you?

Mr. Shiner: No.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I thought it was a strange emphasis, because surely we want all courses to be relevant or kids are going to drop out at an early level.

Mr. Shiner: I think what I should have said is that they must be perceived by them to be relevant. I have taught a variety of subjects. Sometimes the instructor can see how it all ties together, but it is not necessarily conveyed to the student.

Let's look at mathematics, for example. In high school they derive a lot of mathematical formulas. You can see how important that is for the student who is going to go on to mathematics and university or who is going to go on to a science course where he sort of sees a certain necessity for this logical development.

There are other students who could care less about how the thing is developed. What they want to know is: "Which equation do I need to

obtain the loading on that beam? That is what I need to know." That is the sort of thing that I meant as far as relevance is concerned.

Mr. Reycraft: I wanted to ask some questions about the streaming process too. Mr. Shiner, from what you know of the secondary system and the way kids make their option selections for grade 9 and in fact the following secondary grades as well, could you give me your opinion on why students take basic, general or advanced-level courses, one of those as opposed to either of the other two?

Mr. Shiner: I believe in most cases they are encouraged to take the advanced level, especially when they enter grade 9. I believe that they take the general level either when they cannot cope with the advanced and see failure as being the result, or if it were recommended from the elementary school that they should be placed in the general level because they are not likely to be able to cope with the advanced.

I have inquired at our own high school. I do not remember the exact figures now on how many students are in the general level and how many are in the advanced level. The majority in this particular high school, anyway, are in the advanced level. They still have considerable general-level students.

Mr. Reycraft: Is that grade 9 or all the way through?

Mr. Shiner: Both in grade 9 and in grade 12, because at one time I asked the principal at a parent meeting, actually, what the breakdown was. They did not have the figures right there, but certainly the majority were in the advanced.

Some of those in the general level who started in grade 9 may also have dropped out. Some of the students who started in the advanced level—it may have been grades 9 and 10—have started to take some general subjects in grades 11 and 12.

Mr. Reycraft: You are suggesting then that the kids take the general level courses not because they do not want the advanced level courses but rather because they are unable to take the advanced courses?

Mr. Shiner: I would believe so. There are some students who take shop courses because it is only offered at the general level, and then there are a few courses which are only offered at the general level, other related ones; but in your core subjects, certainly I would say that they take them at the general level because they were failing in the advanced.

I guess we could take the approach and say, "Well, look, why don't we do something about

the students so that they could pass the advanced level course?" I believe the Radwanski report was saying, "We'll have them take English again in the summertime." I would not want to be the English teacher who took reluctant students, but I do not think that is the answer. It is nice to be able to say that, given enough help, everybody can pass high school at the advanced level and go on to become a nuclear scientist, but I do not think so.

In college, I have helped students who have problems. They come up and they have a particular physics problem. You can tell in helping the student whether he is just having a bit of difficulty with math which you can fix up, whether he just did not quite understand it, or whether he really does not know and will probably never know what is going on in this particular topic. I do not think it is just a matter of saying, "Well, Shiner can't teach it, but if only he went to the other teacher, then he could find the clue." I do not think it is as simple as that.

There are different students, and I think we should give the best we can to each of these students, but it should be appropriate to their needs. We should not force our advanced level programs on them when that is not appropriate for them. There are a lot of jobs for the general level graduates.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If I were making the same sort of false distinctions, I might say, essentially, what OSIS is trying to do in theory is to say that people like me who could not do math worth a damn, that is why I became a socialist in the end; as we all know, people—

Interjections.

Mr. Jackson: Accounting means nothing?

Mr. Villeneuve: Now we know. The secret is out.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is better to talk about this than my glands like yesterday, okay?

Mr. Mahoney: What was in that pocket did not add up, that is the problem.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You've got it. It never has—well, never mind.

The point is, at this time I could take a basic or a general level math to get the basics needed and I could still maintain myself in an academic stream which ended me up in university. Instead, in those old days, I had to load up with all sorts of language credits, because I knew I was going to flunk math, in order to have enough credits to go on to university.

OSIS is trying to get away from streaming, in the sense of streaming individuals—we heard that

yesterday—and saying that each one of us has a variety of abilities. In some areas I do have some abilities, and I will try to explain them in detail later on, because I know they are incomprehensible to the other members of the committee.

The labelling that has taken place has put people into a stream of education which really limits where they are going to end up. When you look at who that has been, I defy people to say categorically and objectively that those have been only the people who did not have the intellectual capacity to end up there. There are just basic groups which have found themselves there no matter what their intellectual capacity. That is the danger with that kind of a structure, which hopefully we are trying to get away from a little bit to give more flexibility.

I just find that we tend to categorize people, even here in this discussion now, much more rigidly than we have to in terms of their abilities.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Mahoney indicated he has a supplementary, but I am not sure if it is on Mr. Johnston's supplementary or Mr. Reycraft's question.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I did not ask a question, I just butted in.

Mr. Mahoney: It is really on the streaming issue, which is what Mr. Shiner has been talking about, and the ability grouping. Just very briefly, we have talked about this, but what do you do about the kid who all of a sudden comes alive? He is in the general program and he was streamed there in grade 8 and put in there for grades 9 and 10. All of a sudden, at the first part of grade 11, something clicks; and everybody has seen that happen, either with their own children or with themselves or with someone they have been teaching. The difficulty under the rigid streaming format that you support is that it is extremely difficult to get that kid out of the general and into the advanced because they have all of a sudden woken up, taken an interest, whatever it happens to be. Frankly, I think it happens a lot, and to move from one level to another is not a very common thing.

1110

Mr. Shiner: It is a lot harder to move if you have already been out of the school system entirely because you were not succeeding at all.

Mr. Mahoney: Should there not be a transition mechanism in place in the system to allow for that change? That is really what I am asking.

Mr. Shiner: Sure. I would support a mechanism for that for the student who all of a sudden comes alive, but I do not think you can build your

whole system purely with that hope in mind for the number of individuals there are. If a student does find himself in that situation, obviously, he is going to have to go back a bit. If he has taken mathematics at the grade 10 level at the general level and all of a sudden decides he wants to take it at the advanced, he is going to have to somehow learn enough of the material he has missed so he can cope with grade 11 math. If that means repeating grade 10, this time at the advanced level, or if that means doing it as a summer course—if there are a large number of these students, possibly it means setting up a special course for them, which will bring that along.

I think if that becomes a problem and is identified as a problem, you should set up suitable courses to do it. But I do not think you can do it purely by saying to all the students, with this wide range of abilities, "We're going to keep you all together and make you write essentially the same exams and sit through the same courses."

I have taught courses where I could tell that a quarter to a third of the class wanted to string me up because I was going too slow. They were saying, "Why doesn't he move on?" At the same time, I could see there was probably another third in that classroom who did not quite have it yet. This was in a technology program which did not include the technician program.

If you put them all together, it is not going to work. You end up frustrating people. I do not think it is pleasant to always be at the bottom of the class and always not quite understand and always have to do a little extra work. I think that probably is one of the main reasons students drop out. They make up all kinds of other excuses but I think that has to be one of the main reasons.

Madam Chairman: We have three more members on the list. Mr. Shiner's time is technically over and we do have our next presenter ready to go so I would ask the three remaining members if they could keep their comments and questions towards the brief side.

Mrs. O'Neill: There are two things I want to place on the record—I thought that might be Mr. Johnston coming back—because, first, we do have somebody from the ministry with us this morning. My inability to recognize everybody in the Mowat Block is the disadvantage. Ms. Hardy, sitting here in the front row, will be the resource person this morning if we need any ministry input.

I also feel there is a misunderstanding on Mr. Johnston's part about what the Waterloo separate

school board said yesterday regarding streaming. I think they were talking about integration of special needs children rather than breaking down the streaming. I think, for the record, we should not get their presentation off base by a wrong perception. In any case, I will speak to Mr. Johnston about that when I see him the next time.

Very near the end of your presentation, you made the statement: "It is ironic the school system is willing to give a student a test to decide if he or she will pass or fail but is not prepared to use similar tests to decide if the learning experience has failed the child."

I do not know how familiar you are with the new provincial reviews, but one of their real, high-priority goals is to look at what is supposed to be taught in a given course and to see if the school and/or that particular subject area has met its goals. This is relatively new in the way in which it is being done, because it is not testing school against school or pupil against pupil or teacher against teacher. It is doing exactly what you have suggested. Are these courses reaching the goals that we here in Toronto think they are reaching? Are they achieving what we think they are achieving?

Mr. Shiner: Are you talking about achieving it in a particular classroom?

Mrs. O'Neill: It is done by class. There are about 200 classes being tested at any given time in any given subject area. This year, as you know, we are testing the math and English skills with grade 6. We have done the geography and English in the secondary, and we are working into the science areas, chemistry and physics. This is being done on a cyclical basis, with the core subjects of the languages, math and science.

Mr. Shiner: If I understand what you are saying, it sounds as if it is a step in the right direction. One has to question 200 classes. I mean, it is fine for statistical purposes; it does not do very much for the classes that have not been tested.

Mrs. O'Neill: Those are the ones that are under the test. There are as many or more outside who are doing it on a voluntary basis.

Mr. Shiner: Where that comes from, from my perspective, is that in various contacts that I have had through the last 20 years, any time the topic of giving students a test and using that test to evaluate, it is usually done in the context of evaluating the teacher. I think more than just a teacher should be evaluated.

Mrs. O'Neill: This is definitely not that same context.

Mr. Shiner: My point is that has to be done. We have to have some way of ensuring that if, in this particular school, this child goes from grades 1, 2 and 3, at the end of grade 3 he has achieved a certain proficiency in mathematics, for example, because he has to go on. If there is something wrong with that program, whether the school is not giving sufficient support or whether possibly the students come to that school completely unprepared for school work, one possibility is the teacher is not doing a good job. But that is only one. If you look at all of those things and if, by the end of grade 3, he has not achieved a certain standard, then that should immediately be highlighted and we should say, "Okay, we've got to find that problem and we've got to correct it."

My observations over the past have been that this has not been done. There is no mechanism in place to sort of pick out the weak spots. We end up with a lot of excellent graduates but—

Mrs. O'Neill: I think you should be encouraged by the government initiatives. The government initiative of lowering the class size in the primary and this provincial review are hand-in-hand thrusts. They are across the province, and I hope you will keep in touch with those, through either your regional office or the central office here, because I do think they would be encouraging to you, certainly the early identification and all of the special education and remediation that is going on out there. I think that boards generally, and certainly with the ministry's support, are doing a lot more than they ever were able to do, both resource-wise and just knowledge-wise with the children with special needs who may not be keeping up.

If you need any information, you are certainly very free to request it from any of the offices I have suggested and, if all that fails, my office.

Mr. Michlash: I am interested in what you have said about semestering. You end up by saying that students, for the most part, prefer it, whereas teachers do not. I want you to elaborate on that a bit.

Mr. Shiner: I do not have a lot of statistical data to support that. Starting with the teachers' not preferring it, when I went into my child's high school as an external member of a review team, I had an opportunity of talking to a number of teachers. They were in the process of semestering. They had done it, I guess, a year earlier. The general comments I got from those teachers at that time was that they were doing it, realized they probably had to do it, but were not terribly happy with it.

1120

Mr. Miclash: For what reasons?

Mr. Shiner: The impression I got was they found that it somehow involved more work. I think the biggest problem was that if you do something with a class today you are going to see them again tomorrow, so you have to sort of continue. If you give a test, you have to get it marked faster; if you compare some work today, you have to prepare more for tomorrow. I guess if they had it spread out over a year, even though they may have had more subjects, they found it less stressful. As I say, that is what brought that on.

As far as the students are concerned, a number of times I specifically asked a number of students I have talked to, primarily my own daughter and her friends: "I hear all this about semestering and people are unhappy. What do you think?" The answers always come back, "Well, I prefer it." I think they prefer it because they work on three or four subjects instead of six or eight and get it over with. If it is a particular subject that they do not like, or if they find some situation that they do not like, in a few months it will be over.

Mr. Miclash: What was the response of teachers to the class time that is involved in semestering? As we know, the periods are quite a bit longer than they were.

Mr. Shiner: They were longer prior to semestering, at least in most high schools in the Durham region that I am aware of. They used to offer eight 75-minute periods every two days. Now in those semestered schools they offer four 75-minute periods in one day. If you are asking opinions of the 75-minute periods, there are two quite different opinions. There is mine. Most teachers I have talked to seem to prefer the 75-minute period.

I brought it up once with a vice-principal—he was a science consultant at the time—and his answer to me at that time was, "You have to remember that the kids today have a lot more part-time jobs and you can't expect them to do as much homework as when you, Ted, were at school." Those are their feelings on why it is necessary. My own feeling is that 75 minutes is a long time and I would prefer the kids to do their homework at home rather than at school. I cannot imagine a productive 75 minutes in one shot.

Mr. Furlong: I have a very brief question. Mr. Shiner, as you indicated, you are sort of external to the school system. In the briefs we have received to date, we have had teachers' federations etc. We hear that the school is a

partnership of the students, the teachers, the community, the parents and the home. Based on your experience of being involved as a citizen of the community, based on experiences you have had, do you feel that parents generally understand streaming and the choices that students are going to have to make when they reach high school? We hear it is a very complex thing, with people pro and con. Do you feel that parents generally understand what is happening in the system?

Mr. Shiner: That is a little bit hard to answer, because most of the parents I have contact with are parents who are on committees that I am on and so tend to understand. I think a lot of it probably is not understood. They understand the subjects. It is probably a mixture.

Mr. Furlong: Of the committees that you have served on, has there been any activity which would promote a better understanding of the system? Have any of the committees taken an active role in promoting a better understanding?

Mr. Shiner: Yes, we have; but to be charitable with marginal success. Generally speaking, parents do not come out in droves to attend home and school meetings or anything like that. We have made presentations on a variety of things—curriculum and things like that—but with very limited attendance usually by the people who already know quite a bit about it. Mind you, I think parents look to the school for information more than they look to a parent group. They see parent groups more as fund-raisers than anything else.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank Mr. Shiner not only for coming at the last minute but also for giving us a very stimulating presentation, as you can tell by the fact that we did run over. We never mind doing that, because it is good for us to get feedback from people who sometimes have a bird's-eye view, not necessarily within the system but from their children and from activities from the community's vantage point.

Our next presentation, and we are now virtually on time, is from David Spence. Please come forward, Mr. Spence. Mr. Spence is the past chairman of the Central Ontario Music Consultants' Association.

I am not sure if you were here when I told Mr. Shiner about the committee setup. We have allocated half an hour for your presentation as well as questions; so we would suggest perhaps that you limit the presentation to about 15 minutes and leave plenty of time for members to respond.

DAVID SPENCE

Mr. Spence: I will read quickly then. Thank you for granting me the opportunity to appear before you today. I speak on behalf of a little-known group called COMCA, the Central Ontario Music Consultants' Association. It was formed back in the good old days of area 3, I believe, of the ministry. The group's membership of 25 is made up of music consultants, resource teachers and co-ordinators from Brant, Bruce, Grey, Huron, Perth, Oxford, Waterloo and Wellington county public and separate school boards. I, myself, am a music consultant with the Waterloo county board. I must state at this point that I do not represent the board. Neither do I represent necessarily the opinions of any of the boards that belong to COMCA.

The topics which you are considering—streaming, semestering, the OSIS document and grade promotion—are, of course, not bounded by specific subject discipline but affect all aspects of the secondary school curriculum. Music is no exception. In fact, one area—semestering—has had a profound impact on music programs in the province.

If I may be so bold as to presume that it is not your purpose to study what should be the content of the secondary school curriculum, but rather to determine how the issues outlined have affected and are affecting learning, it will not be necessary to launch into a defence of music as a subject worthy of a significant place in the secondary school curriculum.

However, there is a great deal of concern among music educators that organizational and structural factors can and do have impacts on specific subject disciplines. While my comments may appear to represent the self-interest of a specific group—namely, music educators—it is the interest of the students which I wish to address today.

Notwithstanding my previous comment regarding the need for a defence of music's place in the curriculum, it is necessary to state that music educators have a profound belief in the value of music in the education of young people. The music programs of Ontario have provided students with opportunities to study and perform on instruments as individuals in solos and as members of large and small performing ensembles. Programs have strived to develop the creative abilities as well as the aesthetic and cultural awareness of Ontario's students.

Music programs have provided the kickoff point for many who have entered into one of the province's and the country's largest industries,

the \$8.5-billion Canadian arts industry. School music programs can and should take their place in the secondary schools on both rhapsodic as well as pragmatic grounds.

At the board level, it is not only music educators who value music programs in the schools. Administrators and trustees have seen fit to spend the not insignificant sums of money necessary to equip band, orchestra and, more recently, electronic and computer music programs.

However, music is regarded by some as being peripheral to the real business of education—an amenity, an optional extra, not unlike power steering on a car: it is nice to have, since it makes life more pleasant, but not critical to the basic operation of the machine.

It is the perception of many music educators that when provincial policy decisions are made regarding school programming and structure, there is scant attention paid to the impact which such decisions may have on programs such as music. Whether this perception is accurate or not is a moot point; however, the organization of the school system under OSIS has indeed had a profound impact upon the music programs in our secondary schools.

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I start from the viewpoint that the arts, and music in particular, have a vital role to play in the intellectual, emotional and social development as well as in the preparation for "real life" of our young people and that the structure of the school system, whether through commission or omission, has a profound impact on such programs.

The first area I would like to address is that of diploma requirements. The arts are, of course, acknowledged in the OSIS document to the extent that one of the 30 credits required for the Ontario secondary school diploma is to be in the arts. The implied message, however, is obvious: We should acknowledge the arts, but let's not get carried away. It reinforces the stereotypical image that, like an *hors-d'oeuvre*, a little bit of the arts is good for you but do not confuse it with the meat and potatoes of a solid education. It does not even matter which of the arts you take so long as you have had your little taste.

Apart from the implicit message of the single compulsory arts credit, the fallout of such a program decision is serious.

Arts educators for years have been trying to build bridges among their subjects as well as with other subjects. Integration, which has become the byword in elementary schools through such documents as *The Formative Years* and *PIJ1*, is

difficult to attain in secondary schools at the best of times, as I am sure you will hear in many of the presentations.

A single credit in the arts puts arts teachers in a competitive rather than co-operative mode, each protecting his or her own subject area to garner the students for that precious single credit.

In an entrepreneurial sense, one might argue that such a system could augur well for the student. After all, would not the program planners develop more appealing courses to attract students and in so doing benefit those students? This is a simplistic argument on several counts but, unfortunately, I have heard it used. It must be discounted for the following reasons.

1. Competition among teachers for students often leads to a dilution of—to continue the commercial analogy—the product, which serves neither the student nor the subject.

2. Schools are social as well as educational institutions. Unhealthy competition among staff does little to enhance collegiality. Such situations can and do affect the quality of instruction in the classrooms.

An often-heard quote in the OSIS era is, "I want to take music but I have to take X, Y and zed," or more currently now, "I want to take music but I have to take X, Y and zee." Students now feel, in David Elkind's words, "forced to achieve more earlier." The increased diploma requirements of OSIS and the tendency towards fast-tracking implicit in OSIS give school system sanction to this notion that educational experiences, in order to be valuable, have to be functional either in terms of gaining credentials in the form of diplomas and marks or in terms of its applicability to the quantity of one's life, that is, its material benefits in the future. Small wonder that subjects which deal with quality, beauty and affect have difficulty in such an environment.

The second area of concern is that of semestering. The semestering of secondary school timetables has had a profound and negative impact on school music programs. Most secondary school music programs use performance, either on an instrument or singing, as the primary mode of exploring the world of music. This necessarily implies the development over time of technical proficiency on that instrument or the development of a vocal technique.

The disruptive nature of semestering, in which a full year may elapse between the time a student finishes one music course and begins the next, greatly affects the development of the necessary instrumental or vocal proficiency. In essence,

one almost has to start over again. Such gaps are counterproductive and wasteful of time and resources.

There is an additional logistical problem which develops in the timetabling of semester subjects. In most schools, a grade 9 student will make his or her course selections for grade 10 by January of the grade 9 year. If grade 9 music is offered in the second semester, the student will not have experienced the program before he or she is required to make his or her choices for grade 10. Schools which have traditionally had a 90 per cent retention rate from grade 9 to grade 10 in music have found that that rate dropped to 20 per cent when grade 9 music was moved to the second semester. The obvious solution would appear to be to schedule music in the fall semester. That would be fine from the music teachers' point of view but may not impress the art, physical education, business and technical teachers, all of whom face the same dilemma.

While it is hoped that everyone recognizes that schools cannot be scheduled for the sake of individual programs, it is necessary to point to ways in which some forms of scheduling can have negative impacts on viable programs. It appears that semestering has found a place in Ontario schools in large part because of its administrative convenience rather than for sound pedagogical reasons. Programs which require continuity as well as programs requiring extensive rather than intensive development are poorly served by semestering. The issue goes far beyond music, but I will leave it to the mathematics, science, language and physical education speakers to make their own cases.

A footnote on the question of the impact of semestering on student achievement: John Davis, in 1977, reported that in general semestering did not have a significant impact on achievement. However, it must be noted that the study does not differentiate among arts courses. The experience of those teachers to whom our members relate in COMCA is that less is accomplished within a semestered structure than the traditional structure.

The next issue is streaming. When speaking of streaming as it applies to music, it may be instructive to look at past practice. Until recently, most secondary school programs in music have catered to the "top" students and produced élite performance ensembles. While many schools listed their music courses—at least in pre-OSIS days—as open-level, that is, open to all students, there was a high correlation between student success in the performance music pro-

grams and general academic success at the "advanced" level. Music courses, by their very nature rather than by intent, had a streaming effect.

There has, however, been a growing recognition by music educators, academics, administrators and policymakers of the need to develop courses appropriate to the needs of students who were not attracted to or who did not experience success in performance programs. This need was recognized by the ministry music guidelines that appeared in the 1970s. Guitar, keyboard, steel drum band, as well as synthesizer labs and music-in-life and music-in-society courses have been developed for and have been increasingly popular with so-called basic-level or general-level students. These students are experiencing success in musical studies because the course designers have recognized that not all students thrive on a common blue-plate special course, whether it be band, singing, guitar or appreciation.

Music plays a significant role in the lives of our young people, as the T-shirts and Walkmans in any school corridor or shopping mall will attest, but the interests and backgrounds that spawn this interest are wide and varied. To attempt to design a course which will meet the needs and expectations of every student challenges the imagination to the point of incredulity.

This situation is further compounded by the wide range of musical experiences to which students are exposed in elementary school. This ranges from ad hoc, "Do something if you feel comfortable with it" approaches, to very sophisticated programs taught by specialists, with an unfortunate preponderance of the former.

A student experiences success in direct measure to the extent to which the learning opportunities provided meet his or her perceived needs. However, there may also be needs which are not immediately apparent to the student: the so-called teacher's agenda. In addition, the other stakeholders in the educational process—the ministry, trustees, administrators, parents and the community at large—have expectations and perceptions as to what is needed in the learning situation.

A successful learning experience depends on meeting the student's perceived needs while at the same time addressing externally perceived or mandated needs in a manner that is accessible to the student. This demands a careful tailoring of courses. Perhaps the ideal is a custom-designed course for every student.

Reality dictates less differentiation. Currently, there are three major levels of differentiation, with programs such as co-op, enrichment, independent study, home study and remedial programs designed to cover the scope of our student population.

The unintended result of such differentiation of program may have been a ghettoization of the various school programs, and if it has, changes should be made. However, to advocate totally unstreamed programs invites disaster, not just for music but for all subject areas.

In his recent doctoral thesis for the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Bernard Andrews developed, described and outlined the need for differentiated types of music programs to meet different student needs. Andrews sees the learner not as a unit which can be simply multiplied by the number of students in a classroom, school or province and plugged into a common program but as learners presenting varied needs, attitudes, learning styles and abilities and therefore needing differentiated programs and forms of learning experience.

It is not the wish of music teachers to remain preservers of élite programs for the top students but rather to expand the process, content and methodology of the music experiences to all students in the secondary school. This cannot be done unless there is a recognition that there are different audiences out there and that, in order to meet their needs, courses must be differentiated. If this means streaming, so be it.

There may be other means in which learning experiences may be differentiated, but a common course for all students is not, as I say to my own children, one of the choices.

The Ontario education system is large—huge, in fact—and there are many interests, pressures and limitations which face policymakers. If I may use a nautical analogy, it is not surprising that once such a large ship is steaming in a certain direction, changing course is a slow and delicate operation. It may also be true that such a large and in many ways comfortable ship may from time to time wander off course in such small increments that no one notices for a long time. Tides and currents also change, and there may be malfunctions in various parts of the ship's systems. These changes may have a significant impact on the passengers and cargo, negative for some and positive for others, yet the crew may be unaware.

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It appears that in Ontario various whistles and alarms have been sounding with increasing

intensity. There have been a few shots across the bows and an outright strafing from the good ship Radwanski. Such signals present challenges and provoke defensive responses but ultimately serve to alert all those on board to attend to the situation.

Without stretching the analogy too far past the point of tedium, it is my hope that the response is a considered one and not a call to abandon ship nor to start a procession down the gangplank.

The third area I would like to address is directions. I believe that in responding too forcefully to pressures for change, there is a danger of creating negative, unintended outcomes. Just as the streaming of curriculum may have created divisions along socioeconomic and cultural lines and semestering may have weakened viable programs, attempts to remedy those programs may well create their own set of unintended outcomes, which may have negative repercussions for large numbers of children over a long period of time.

I propose that in your deliberations on these matters, you consider the Ministry of Education's own model for curriculum change, known as the curriculum review development and implementation process. It is a cyclical process; that is, the three elements—review, development and implementation—follow each other in sequence, but the process constantly renews itself.

The significant feature of the process, however, is that each of the three phases contains its own cycle of review, development and implementation. It is this element that must be attended to in the development phase of any new policy regarding school structure. There must be an evaluation of the development within the development phase in order to try to anticipate and account for unintended outcomes of proposed structures. It is only through such deliberation in all phases of the cycle that major problems can be avoided.

As an advocate for a specific subject area—namely, music—within the general area of the arts, I also urge that in considering changes to the school structure, the arts should not be placed in as an apparent afterthought. Either they are worth including or they are not. If they are to be included, then they must be included in such a way that they can do the job they are supposed to do. The school structure should be a response to the needs of those whom it affects most, the students. Students come in infinite variety and need educational experiences that meet their individual needs. The school structure must revolve around and be responsive to those needs.

I urge you also to consider Neil Postman's admonition to view schools as a counterbalance to the tendencies of current fads as expressed in the media. In an era that emphasizes material acquisition and idealizes the lives of the rich and famous, schools should consider and emphasize the qualitative aspects of life, the very stuff of the arts.

A final note—and I have not decided whether that pun is intended—the title of these hearings, "The Organization of the Educational Process in Ontario," carries with it the imagery of logistics, administering and production. Yet the schools of our province are much more than organizational units. In your deliberations, please keep uppermost in your minds that our schools are populated by individuals, each with his or her own needs, aspirations and dreams.

As Elliot Eisner points out, "The metaphors and images of schooling and teaching that we acquire have profound consequences for our educational values and for our views of how schooling should occur."

To speak of structure, organization, requirements and achievement promotes a mindset ill disposed to consider the importance of affect, feeling, relationships and understanding. I urge you in your deliberations to watch your metaphors lest they limit your vision of our children.

On behalf of the Central Ontario Music Consultants' Association, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for sharing those thoughts with us. This is the first presentation we have had from a music vantage point, and you have certainly made a very eloquent case about semestering. I personally found your comments about the retention rate as compared to previous years from the grades 9 and 10 group of music students quite enlightening.

I will now call for questions from members.

Mr. Reyecraft: I too want to compliment you, Mr. Spence, for your presentation and the quality of the brief.

In the early part of it, you talked about OSIS and focused on some of the impacts, but you stopped short of suggesting whether or not this committee should recommend any changes to the document. I wonder if I could invite you to make some recommendation or suggestion to us.

Mr. Spence: I will probably wear several hats as I do this, and my comments will place me under different hats.

I think, in many cases, we are dealing with a subjective reality; that is, a perception of what

ministry intentions are when they come out to the school level, that requiring one arts credit implies a de-emphasis of importance from the ministry's point of view. That is the way it is read by parents, students and people who make decisions within school boards.

As a lobbyist for my particular subject area, I would like to say music is important and it should receive more emphasis. If it is important, then all students should be exposed to it; therefore, there should be more than one compulsory credit in that area.

In the past, there had to be four arts credits, and then for some unknown reason physical education was put in with the arts, but it allowed a higher profile to come through for the arts. Students would have a wider exposure. Now the timetable is more crowded, and I feel that—I am not sure exactly how to phrase this—our subject is important and it deserves a higher place. If we are going to do that through compulsory credits, then there should be more compulsory credits in the arts area. I do not know if that addresses your comments.

Mr. Reyecraft: That is helpful. We are at the same time getting advice that there is already too little flexibility in the curriculum, that to compound that by adding to the number of mandatory credits would enhance the problem.

Mr. Spence: If I may comment on that, that is the other alternative, to have more of a balance between what is compulsory and what is optional. As far as I am concerned, that does allow a better point of view, because it allows people to meet the needs of the individual communities of students or areas within the province. Either you make everything compulsory, and that means there is a central decision as to what is important and how much of everything everybody should be exposed to, or it goes in the other direction and those decisions are made at the smaller unit level, at the board level or at the school level or perhaps even the classroom level.

Mr. Reyecraft: We have been very close to having both of those extremes in the last 25 years, and now I am between the two.

I want to question you a little further about streaming. I appreciate what you have said about it. I want to place to you the same question that I placed to the last presenter. In your opinion, why do kids select the level of courses that they do?

Mr. Spence: I once heard a Canadian version of a joke that went, "What do you want to do when you grow up?" The person said, "I want to be Prime Minister." The adult said, "Well, why did you set your sights so low?"

I think students bring with them a mindset to kindergarten, whether they know it or not, that in a way predetermines a lot of what they are going to do or not do in their lives. I think the schools try to provide an ameliorating influence on that, generally with the notion of raising students' expectations of themselves. I do not know that they counterbalance that totally successfully, but I think what happens is that the students select into particular areas because of a combination of that mindset and the degree of success that they have experienced in elementary school. If they have not experienced a large degree of success, then they self-select into areas which presumably are designed for people who have not had that great deal of academic success in the elementary school.

Of course, once it becomes systematized and institutionalized, it is hard to know whether the chicken or the egg is coming first and whether the system pushes people in that direction or people respond to the system or whether people are driving the system. When I say people, I mean students at that level.

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Mr. Reyecraft: How extensive do you think is the number of students who are able to successfully complete advanced level courses but opt to take general level courses instead? Are there very many of them?

Mr. Spence: I think there is a significant number. I do not know that it is a negative. In the best of all possible worlds, where after secondary school there are more choices than just university or the workforce—namely, colleges or private technical training places—that is fine. I think students should be allowed to select, with parental guidance, where they are going. It is a question of whether or not it is better to get 60 per cent in an advanced level course or feel good about yourself and get 85 per cent in a general level course. If we constantly push people to the top, in a way they are achieving more but their perception is that they are not experiencing as great a degree of success. If they go to hairdressing school, they will all get 95 per cent.

The success in school is often measured in terms of marks. I do not know if you are considering throwing out marks or not, but I have a feeling that is not going to happen. If you get 55 per cent in an advanced course, you may think that general level would be better, because not only is it an easier ride, but also you will get better marks and therefore will feel better about what you are doing and take it.

Mr. Mahoney: I had another question, but maybe as an observation on that, I find a similar analogy in sports, for example. Today streaming goes on in sports. Kids are put in areas of ability where they will play with and against children of similar ability. Yet often the child who is pushed into a little higher level will excel because of the level of competition, etc. There is definitely a fine line. I would tend to agree that there are a lot of young people in our system who are cruising along at the comfort level of the general course who, if they were pushed a little bit, could do better. I guess that really is just a personal observation.

One of the things we have been talking about is the relevance of education, that if we are going to deal with the dropout rate and with making education more effective for our young people today, it should be relevant. I am wondering if we recognize the relevance of the arts, music and other components of the arts too late in life to make them terribly relevant to us. The student going through high school has a great deal of difficulty understanding the relevance of history, the relevance of math, things of that nature. They say, "When am I ever going to use this in real life?" I think many of us have heard it. The same could likely be said about music.

My question to you on your specialty is, how do we make music more relevant at an early age, so that the young people will realize what many of us come to realize later in life, "Gee, I wish I had taken the piano"? Or you see somebody like Chairman Frank Bean entertaining the troops and you go, "Boy, I would love to be able to do that." He realized the relevance of that particular sector and the talent he had at a very early age. I suspect many of us have those talents, but they have never been brought out.

Mr. Jackson: Yes, but you do all the singing.

Mr. Mahoney: I do a certain amount of it and I play a pretty mean washboard.

Mr. Furlong: If he played the piano, he would be brutal.

Mr. Jackson: His years as an altar boy were not wasted.

Mr. Mahoney: Are you talking about my wine consumption?

Mr. Spence: I chose today to limit my remarks and point them towards the secondary school. I have another sermon that I could deliver on elementary school music. I did allude to it at one point. I think part of the problem comes from the fact that in an elementary school teachers who feel they cannot carry a tune in a bucket are

expected to teach music programs. They have three records and an eight-year-old record player and not many resources at their disposal. A kindergarten teacher now can become a kindergarten teacher without ever having any musical training, whereas back in the good old days you had to have at least grade 8 piano and so you had to have some sort of familiarity with the world of music.

I liken it to teaching French. We do not ask unilingual anglophones to teach French in our schools, but we ask people who do not understand or speak the language of music to teach music. The music programs that result from that are generally abysmal. If that is not addressed, you cannot hope to kindle the spark in somebody else if that spark is not alive in you.

If I may allude to our board, many of our principals are starting to see the benefit of having a music specialist from kindergarten through grade 6. In the schools where that person is there, the life and vitality that is in the school is really quite amazing and it is a wonder to see. The students can be wearing their AC/DC or Iron Maiden sweatshirts and singing an English folk song and loving it. Most people would not believe that and you may say, "That is totally irrelevant to their form of life," but they are doing it and they are loving it because that spark has been ignited by a teacher who is committed to that subject area.

I know I run contrary to the idea of a holistic, integrated approach in the primary schools when I say specialist in subjects because their kids are divided in so many ways now, but when you see what happens with students, it is truly marvelous. If that were happening on a wider level and if I were going to make one recommendation to you in the elementary area, it is really to look at how the arts are taught and the qualifications of the people who are expected to teach.

Mr. Mahoney: I guess the concern I would have in the secondary level, and maybe you have an answer to this, would be that if you were to make of the 30 credits more than one mandatory in the arts—pick a figure, three—are you running the risk, for the large majority of students who have come through elementary school without a basic foundation in the arts, of losing the relevancy and then wondering, "What the heck am I studying this for?"

Mr. Spence: Yes, there is that risk in having a one-shot area, a shot at dance, one at music and one at art. I think you would have to make it four now since there are official guidelines for dance. That would be a difficult course to teach and to

design in such a way that it would be acceptable to the entire population. My preference would be that the school move towards fewer compulsory subjects so that the custom tailoring of individual students who have a real interest in that area could be met.

The blue-plate special metaphor that I used came from a former principal of mine who was countering a parent's argument that kids were just taking basket weaving now. This was back after the end of the Robarts plan. He said: "No. Ninety-five per cent of our students are taking the same sort of programs they used to take in the good old days." It is that five per cent you would love to be able to address, whether they are at the top, the bottom, in the middle or wherever they are. I think that comes through more flexibility rather than less.

Mrs. O'Neill: I have not heard you mention the word "itinerant." I know that is the way many boards deal with the subject area you represent so well. Would you give us your personal comments on that? It seems to be practical in many instances.

Mr. Spence: As a logistical solution, it is okay; but in the best of all possible worlds, it stinks. It is hard for the teacher and it is hard for the students. It is hard to have a feeling that music belongs to the school when somebody parachutes in and out to teach it. It is also hard for that person to work with other teachers and to integrate an aspect of what they are doing in music with what is happening in environmental studies, or to focus the entire school that year. It is very difficult to do, but if you have only six classrooms in your school, you obviously cannot hire somebody full-time just to do music and expect to keep the mill rate within line.

Mrs. O'Neill: Do you feel there are enough supports? I presume most of these people who do these jobs in these boards belong to your association. Do you feel there is any way to support that kind of program better from a central point of view?

Mr. Spence: Yes. I have been doing a fair amount of work for other presentations. I am a consultant and I am in curriculum support and teacher support. I think there should be a recognition centrally that there has to be a critical mass below which you cannot go in central resource support. I am speaking at the board level. I come from a large board with 50,000 students and a resource staff that is the envy of many. The pressure on us is to reduce that because other boards do not have it; and we say no, other boards are worshipping what we have done because they cannot do the job they are expected to do.

We have the tax base in order to do that. I think what has to happen is at the central level there has to be support to say that no matter how small the board, we will provide at least the money to support a minimum resource staff. There are many boards in Ontario that have nobody representing the arts at the central level. The teacher has no place to go, except maybe to a conference every other year if it is his turn on the cycle. It is impossible to do the job. I suggest that you cannot just say, "We will make the superintendent in this area responsible for music, phys ed and French, and this superintendent responsible for geography, history and physics." There is too much to know to be able to do a job well under those conditions.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank you, Mr. Spence, for your presentation today. It may give you some comfort to know you are not alone. On September 19 in Ottawa, we have the Nepean Symphony Orchestra. I have noted that on September 22 we have the Ontario Choral Federation and on Wednesday, September 28, we have the Ontario Federation of Symphony Orchestras. You may get a lot of backup and substantiated support for what you have said here today. Thank you very much.

Mr. Spence: Thank you.

The committee recessed at 12:01 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:08 p.m. in room 151.

Madam Chairman: As a courtesy to our presenters, I think we will begin. I would like to welcome the Ontario Secondary School Principals' Council today. We had your colleagues from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation yesterday, so we are quite anxious not only to hear your words of wisdom but also to question you at the end. You can begin whenever you are ready and introduce yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL

Mr. Lennox: I am John Lennox and I am principal of D. A. Morrison Junior High School in East York. On my left is Mrs. Betty Moore, who is principal of M. M. Robinson High School in Burlington. On her left is Bob Buckthorp, the executive assistant from OSSTF assigned to the Ontario Secondary School Principals' Council. On my right is Bill Irwin, who is with the Lincoln County Board of Education in charge of community education and prior to that was principal of Grimsby District Secondary School.

As you have mentioned, we consider our comments to be supplementary to the presentation of yesterday. What I would like to do is just briefly go through the presentation, and then we are prepared to answer any questions you may have about these four issues addressed here or about anything else.

As you know, we are quite interested in OSIS, and since the inception of OSIS we have conducted an annual survey of student credit selections and the effect these credit selections have had on secondary education and on our students. Appendix 1 is the preliminary report of some of these statistics from this year's survey, some of which you may wish to talk to us about later on today.

It is interesting, for example, to notice that approximately 50 per cent of the students who received a diploma in June have planned to return again for a fifth year in September. We have also highlighted the teachers' shortage that the principals highlighted for us in our survey. These were positions that were advertised and there was difficulty in finding qualified teachers to replace them. It also shows, for us, the alarming statistic of the number of technology shops that have been closed since the inception of OSIS.

We believe that perhaps a more accurate picture of the first OSIS cohort may be looked at next June, when many of the first OSIS students will complete their secondary school education. As we mention on page 3, we are quite willing and prepared to help and assist the ministry and the government in assessing the impact of OSIS on these students.

We are concerned about the need for additional funding to school boards, on page 3, and Mrs. Moore is quite prepared, along with Mr. Buckthorp, to highlight those concerns further.

The survey I referred to a moment ago highlights for you the number of technology shops that are closed or that are needed. In some schools now, it is getting to the point that the shop that is open is the shop for which a teacher has been found, and it may not necessarily be the most appropriate shop. If we are expected to offer practical training in order to retain some of our students, it is very difficult when these people are not available.

Page 4 highlights our concerns and our comments on the increase of the mandatory credits and the effect this may have on students studying in the basic and general-level programs. I have taught these students for many years and I know the increase in mandatory credits is something that makes the education of these students more difficult.

Under semestering, I guess it is quite simple and straightforward to say that we believe school organization is and must remain a school-based decision and often reflects the particular needs of students in our community. Under the present system and the emphasis of the government on students that they should be able to fast-track, our concern may be has semestering or some other form of school organization been introduced for the benefit of the students or in order to encourage the idea that fast-tracking is possible in a school? The pressure this puts on students, not just the advanced students or the students who are preparing to go to university but also the students at the basic and general-level program areas is quite phenomenal.

If I could be personal for a moment, my 18-year old daughter was planning to fast-track. This would have meant that in her third year of school, she would have been taking six subjects that were either mathematics or science. This is a student who is playing the trombone in the school band and is one of the top female athletes in her

school, playing field hockey and football. I do not think this is the kind of program my children should have. We believe at the Ontario Secondary School Principals' Council that a broad-based education is far more appropriate, rather than forcing some students to consider the four-year approach to education. In fact, our survey indicates that most of them are returning for the fifth year anyway.

On page 5, there is a brief comment on grade promotion. We are quite consistent with the policy of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation that it is a retrogressive step, and we are opposed to reintroducing the grade promotion idea. This was the one that probably most of us went through where, you know, if you had 60 per cent and two failures, you were able to go on. If you did not, you stayed behind.

On page 6, we refer to a few comments on streaming. I think a key point on page 6 is that we recommend the government wait until the new learning materials, new guidelines and new resources that are being produced by the ministry to implement OSIS are in. Perhaps we should wait to see the effect of these. Mr. Buckthorp perhaps has some comments to make on those later.

That does not mean to say we are opposed to change. We are prepared to look at the appropriateness of a nonstreamed system. We believe it may be more appropriate, however, to examine whether some subjects or some grades could or should be nonstreamed, rather than deciding between a streamed or a nonstreamed system.

In conclusion, as you know we are anxious to be involved. We have been involved in the past in the input and in some cases, at least until recently, in the implementation of some of the decisions. We are prepared to help again.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lennox. Would any other members from the council like to comment before we go to members' questions?

Mrs. Moore: I am Mrs. Moore, past chairperson of OSSPC. One comment made by Mr. Lennox earlier was in the area of funding. He had indicated an intent to further the conversation in that area.

There is some concern on the texts that are available at this particular time for the programs under OSIS. There is one concern there. If a publisher is very quick to have a textbook on the market, as soon as possible because of the guideline coming in at the time at which it is coming in and a publisher being ready at the time the guideline comes into effect, this may mean

that we simply do not have time to do an overall assessment of a variety of texts for the programs in our schools, and that is certainly a concern for us. We would like to have the opportunity to have many texts available that we could look at for the programs being offered in our schools, rather than dealing with those who are a little quicker at getting those ready for publication. That is a concern.

The other concern, of course, is with the texts being provided for the Ontario academic courses now. Of course, grant money was provided for that, but still a lot of money is required to have textbooks coming in for all the grades in the school under OSIS and for the OACs. There is some concern coming up. We do not know what the results will be. We will certainly work very hard at it, but as for getting those textbooks back into the schools at the end of each of those terms when the students are finished with them, we have not had the experience yet in dealing with the students under the OAC program as far as getting those texts returned is concerned.

Our experience has been with the grade 13 texts. Students like to keep those books. They use them as they go on into post-secondary courses. They want to maintain them. We may have some struggles getting those back. We will work very hard at it in the high schools, but I think we are going to see some troubles there. Those are just some of the things we are dealing with as far as the textbooks are concerned. I am sure there will be others come up, but those are the high points of it.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you very much for presenting this survey. It is certainly nice to see the people in the field taking the broad view and bringing us some statistics that we were looking for. We have had two or three presenters talk to us about teacher shortages. You seem to have brought to light many more areas, or certainly in a more refined way the areas in which we are encountering this difficulty.

I was very surprised to see the business subjects component here in your survey. I also was happy to see that you broke down the technology program and made the remark that often it is because of the availability of a teacher that a shop is opened. What I would like to ask you is how you deal with things like the business subjects. My understanding, just from osmosis and listening as I have been around here for a while, is that the business subjects are becoming more popular all the time. How are you dealing with that? How are you dealing with this technology where you are having difficulty? I

understand electronics and auto are some things that are coming on stream that are very popular? How do you deal with that? Are you into a lot of retraining with your members? Are you trying to bring people in on letters of approval? I guess that is what I would like to know.

Mr. Lennox: I think I will first ask Mr. Irwin. He was on the tech ed task force and might be able to bring some comments there, and Mrs. Moore has a technology component in her school and perhaps she could comment on that.

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Mr. Irwin: I am Bill Irwin and I am involved not only with adolescents but also with adult retraining in the secondary school field. We do have a problem with the technologies and with business in attracting teachers in specific areas where we need their expertise. We are at a loss at the moment to retrain our present teachers in those fields. We are attracting new people, and effectively. In some cases, we do have to go to letters of approval for people who are not trained.

Business is growing. Technology dropped following the introduction of OSIS, but is now on its way up as we get more into the retention of potential dropouts and the re-entry of dropouts in the secondary schools. It is an entirely new ball game we are now in. We are looking at the dropouts and are trying to put together programs that are not just a single course, but are perhaps four courses placed into a semester.

We have found that a great deal of help has come from industry and business in this area. We are involved with the co-operative education mode and place many of the students we attract back into the school for this type of training. We place them in business and in industry where there is a great deal of help and expertise out there, not only for the students but for the teachers because we can update our curriculum very quickly by speaking to the people who really are the experts in the field at this stage as far as what is needed in business and tech is concerned.

There definitely is a shortage in technical education right now as far as teachers are concerned; and one of the problems, of course, is the method of attracting people from the field into education, the lack of openings at the colleges of education for this type of person; and the money, naturally.

Mrs. O'Neill: From your overview then, can you suggest that at times you cannot offer programs because you do not have teachers? Do you have actual instances where you cannot offer a program that perhaps was even in the calendar?

Mr. Irwin: This year we had a teacher in welding at St. Catharines Collegiate who became ill over the summer. We had quite a difficult time locating a teacher for welding; in fact, we have a person there at the moment who is not qualified, so we still search. In Lincoln county, we have not had to close any shops because of lack of teachers, but that is not the case in other areas.

Mrs. O'Neill: The tech component of the co-op programs is quite high in many boards; I presume that is what you are saying. Have you done anything in the way of having teachers go out on a sabbatical or for some part of their own professional development? Are those kinds of strategies in place in tech ed when you are suggesting that the communities are the resource and the businesses in a community are the best resource for tech ed at the moment?

Mr. Irwin: It varies across the province. The strategies are there. It is a case of co-operation with the boards of education for leaves that are granted. Many teachers are going back at their own cost to take this type of training in the field, but there is no definite pattern at this stage. It is financed elsewhere.

Mrs. O'Neill: My final question is about the faculties. Where do you feel the faculties of education are in tech education? Do you have liaison built into those bodies?

Mrs. Moore: We are in competition there. We know where we are going to need tech people down the line for those who are retiring and we are in very heavy competition. We are phoning the faculties and getting in there. From board to board, we are now moving in there, say in January, trying to ensure that we have people ready to go into our courses, not just in tech but in other areas, in time for the following year, so there is extremely heavy competition.

We are in the Golden Horseshoe and it is easier for people coming into that area. Certainly, for the people who are in the northern schools, it is extremely difficult because in most cases we are going to be able to pull those teachers to our schools around the Golden Horseshoe, which makes it that much more difficult for those who are located a long distance from the training colleges. That is certainly a concern for those northern areas and something that has to be considered. It is not just the people in this area who are looking for those teachers.

We are out there beating the bushes for teachers everywhere, people who have relatives who taught and have left the teaching profession. We are asking them to come in for an interview to

see if they are available for teaching. The retraining situation was mentioned there.

We sometimes run our shop courses at the junior level only, the intermediate level, and we are not able to offer the senior-level courses because the people are not qualified at the senior level. There are some cases where we have not been able to run senior programs, particularly in electronics.

That is one situation that comes up probably more frequently than many others. In order to get the teachers, we also share teachers. That is something else we do. We will arrange with another school to have a teacher come into our school in one semester and then go to the shared school in the second semester.

There are ways and means that we are using to cope with the situation, but it certainly is a concern.

Mrs. O'Neill: Is the program being built up in the faculties—I guess that was my bottom-line question—or are you able to push that there be more emphasis?

Mrs. Moore: We are pushing. We have phoned the faculties. We have asked if they can increase the enrolment in the courses that are there. The comment that comes back each time is the funding situation and the need for more money in order to be able to increase the accommodation for the students. There is a concern that there are simply not enough people going in to provide the schools with people coming out.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you for giving me your input on that very important area.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do you have an idea at the moment how many students are in the faculties receiving tech?

Mr. Buckthorp: My understanding is that there are courses at Queen's and Western, both of which have about 30 to 35 people in them, and they claim that they cannot offer larger courses. That has created a real problem for us. We have brought it to the faculty's attention several times. We brought it up again at the teacher education review. Maybe there is something in there that would be useful to us, but they always claim it is the funding; they simply cannot offer it. They claim there are candidates out there who are willing to come into the faculties, but they cannot be admitted; either they do not have the qualifications or there is not the space at the faculties to receive them.

Mr. Jackson: For the record, is it also because they do not have an 85 per cent average?

Mr. Buckthorp: They go into the faculties under different requirements than the university degree people; they are coming directly in from business and industry. There are different requirements for business and industry going into the faculties, but they work their way through that.

Further to Mrs. O'Neill's comments, another thing the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation did was offer some computer-assisted drafting and computer auto mechanic courses during the summer for teachers. We had a really excellent response from around the province because no one else was offering them, and they did not have the opportunity to get this updating anywhere else. They were very successful courses. As most of you are aware, our structure simply does not have the resources to continue offering those kinds of updating courses every summer, but they were very successful and we were very pleased with that.

One of our problems in tech is mix and match. The average age in the tech area now is in the 50s. Jim mentioned yesterday that the average age of our members is 46. That will change rapidly over the next five or six years, downward, but in the tech area it is now in the 50s. When you try to tell somebody who has been teaching since the 1950s in an auto mechanic shop that he is going to retrain himself now, two years before his retirement; or if he is taking the window next year he just sort of looks at you. In Metro Toronto, we find that a lot of the tech teachers in the pool who are surplus are simply not able to be matched with the requirements, and the boards are going out to hire tech teachers in the service industry area, for instance. There is a mix-and-match problem as well with the people we presently have in the system and what is required now for the student choices.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The maximum number of graduates who can be produced, certificated teachers out of the schools, would be 70?

Mr. Buckthorp: If those numbers are correct. I think we had better check that; maybe the ministry can get you better data on that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is mind-bogglingly low.

Mr. Jackson: In your treatment of OSIS, the final conclusion you make for your recommendation is: "We believe that in spite of the efforts of our schools to provide innovative programs, alternative education and co-op programs, the dropout rate may in fact increase." Could you please tell me on what basis you drew that

conclusion, and could you expand on that comment?

Mr. Buckthorp: The failure rate under the pre-OSIS program was highest in the general- and basic-level programs. Alan King's studies show that is expected to continue to be a trend. They have added three more credits that those students need to receive a general- or basic-level Ontario secondary school diploma and therefore it is expected that the dropout rate at that level will be quite a bit higher. Because we do not have all the data from the first round of OSIS, we do not know that is true; we are simply projecting it.

The principals may have noticed something in their own schools that would indicate that one way or the other; whether there is a higher dropout rate for that reason or whether the guidance departments are suddenly getting a higher call on their services for that.

Those are all projections based on past experience, and Alan King's research shows that is likely to continue.

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Mr. Lennox: When I was in charge of a basic-level program, we were dealing with a considerable number of students, perhaps a total enrolment at a basic level of around 200. We found that most students back in the old days got their first 16 credits; in other words, they got eight the first year, or maybe seven, and perhaps eight or seven or so the second year. Everyone sort of made it to 16. You were aiming for 27, and it looked like everyone was going to make it. Then all of a sudden the number of students who achieved 21 credits became less. We were looking at perhaps nine or 10 students who might in fact then have reached the 27 or the diploma requirements, and very rarely at the end of the fourth year, back in the old system.

It seemed that the attraction of work, the ability to get a part-time job and other interests—even a car—made it more difficult for many of these students to achieve their diploma requirements. The university-bound students—I hope Betty will agree with me here—seemed to have that goal where they had to continue to achieve, get their credits and make it to university.

To put three more credits, plus six more mandatory credits, on students who perhaps are not as academically oriented as other students, we believe will make it more difficult for those kinds of students to persevere, hang in and finish their education. Certainly, they will not do it in four years.

Mrs. Moore: No. We are looking at a five-year situation for almost all of them and more than that for some.

What we are seeing, however, is another aspect that again has to do with our definition of "dropout." After some experience in some of the very low-skill jobs they are taking on—as you just mentioned, there is a very high job market there—they are going out and finding that in many cases they do not have an opportunity to increase their standing in those jobs and they are now coming back in.

We see those students, in the week before school starts each year, sitting beside our desks saying, "I realize that in order to be able to get another kind of job, I am going to have to have that diploma in my hand." They are back in again, and they do come back in with an honest intent. As they are sitting there, at that point, they do have an honest intent to succeed. I do not think any student walks in the building at that time without an intent to succeed for himself.

The thing is it is very difficult for them as the year progresses knowing that they still have a fairly large number of credits ahead of them that they must achieve in order to get that diploma. We may see them drop out again, and then they will come back in even a third time. We still keep working with them to try to help them through, but it is difficult.

Mr. Jackson: I do not see a lot of recommendations from the principals' association with respect to OSIS. I see the recommendation that no major changes be implemented until the effects of the new curriculum are known and examined.

Yesterday we heard from the Association of Large School Boards in Ontario. Fiona Nelson gave us some in-depth challenges to chew on with respect to grades 7 through 10 and the notion of tightening up or limiting the number of choices for students in the early years, in grades 9 and 10, which we all understand to be the years in which the school has a little more control over the students. Given that they must be in school, so that should they exit on their 16th birthday or in September of a year in which their 16th birthday falls, so that they can leave when they are 15—all of those factors—perhaps the quality of our dropouts might be marginally enhanced, if I can put it in that context, if certain mandatory programs were established and fewer options exercised in the earlier grades. Could any of you comment on that?

Mr. Lennox: I can give you the example of my school. Every student takes six subjects, and really then there is only a choice of two, the six being math, science, English, phys ed, French and so on. Most students, if keyboarding is

offered, will take keyboarding; so we are down to one choice. From that they can select art, music, consumer education, family studies or industrial arts.

In the four high schools I have been in, that has been the pattern for most grade 9 choices. They really are choosing almost a core of seven subjects, certainly six, and then scrambling around for the seventh or eighth subjects, those subjects that we want them to take. They have been limited because they are all taking English, of course they are all taking French, they are all taking phys ed and they recognize the necessary or valuable skill of keyboarding.

I think from my experience that is a pretty limited curriculum for the younger students. Is that the way it is with you, Betty?

Mrs. Moore: The package is actually there, in fact. Our concern is that we want them to have a broad-based education too. There are some choices they need to make there to try some courses for future interests that they may have. The biggest difficulty I find is for them to be able to fit those extra courses in.

Mr. Jackson: When I worked with you on the early school leaving programs for 10 years, Betty, I remember we were always trying to monitor the at-risk student who was failing in English, mathematics and maybe one of the humanities but was acing art and phys ed, and the pattern was emerging in the second semester.

Have we ever monitored the failure rate of dropouts by backtracking their records to determine the degree to which we were catching them? I am accepting what you have said in the previous question about it being available. It raises in one's mind which out of those bundle of subjects are they failing in or dropping and in which are they excelling. There is forward progress, as we understand, but how are we focusing in on remediating in those areas?

Mrs. Moore: The Ontario Secondary School Principals' Council has not done that as a group, but the Alan King study has; possibly Bob could speak to that.

Mr. Buckthorp: The Alan King study showed that was in fact what was happening in schools, that these students were—I am sorry, my mind just went offtrack there; I wanted to make the point on remediation, because that is the last thing you said and that is how my mind got offtrack.

When Bill 82 came in, many boards confused, and still confuse, remediation and special education; they are not the same at all. They got rid of the remediation teachers and hired special-ed

teachers. If we are going to make this program a success for the students in grades 9 and 10, then it is going to have to be with considerable remediation resources being available to the schools, because the regular classroom teachers do not have the time or the training to do that with their 180 students a day.

One of the problems we are finding in responding to your committee and giving you more specific answers to what you want is that we are in the middle of this process. We have proposed as discussion points some rather radical solutions to certain problems, but we have not received our membership's response; so we cannot come down here as OSSTF or OSSPC and say this is what we recommend firmly, we have to wait for that response before we can do that. We would be pre-empting our members.

But yes, we are looking at the general package for grades 9 and 10. We are looking at the smaller number of teachers they would be exposed to in grades 9 and 10. The document is deliberately vague on whether or not grades 9 and 10 in a general studies package should be streamed; it could either be streamed or not streamed; we also want our membership's response on that issue. We did not come out with firm positions on those issues because we want the classroom teachers to tell us what is feasible.

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Mr. Jackson: Do you believe the remediation elements to be what Radwanski referred to as the mentoring? Is that akin to what you were—

Mr. Buckthorp: Mentoring is part of it, but it is also the actual remediation teachers who are trained in remediation. It is a specific skill to sit down with those students, especially in math and English, to give them those numeracy and literacy skills. We find that a lot of students who go on through high school can pass by getting 51 per cent in their subjects—that is what the system does to them—but because of the 49 per cent they did not get, when they leave school they are going to have some employers saying, "This kid doesn't have these skills." Yet the system will not allow us to have a higher failure rate; that would only create a higher dropout rate. There has to be a balance in there somewhere of what the public wants.

Mr. Jackson: My final question has to do with semestering. We are hearing a variety of responses to the issue of semestering as an educational structure, both complete accessibility for all students to a semestered situation within a board, and no access to anything else other than a semestered situation. We have heard opinions

that it should be balanced, that they should have an option to attend both within a board.

I am having difficulty, when I look at the compelling arguments on both sides of semestering, believing that so many educational groups can say: "Leave it up to local autonomy. We'll know what is best." Either it is educationally sound and we should come out and say that for sound educational reasons, or it is somehow wandering in sort of mid-earth, that with pros and cons we are not quite sure. If that is the case, why are so many boards totally on a semestered basis?

It was even suggested yesterday by ALSBO that we should be encouraging access to both structures within a given school, which I would consider somewhat administratively nightmarish. I know we tried it in Halton. Could you contribute more than what you presented in print? I am not looking for a statement that says semestering is good or bad. I am just trying to get a handle on why everybody is saying, "No, no, it's sacred; leave it to local autonomy between the principal and his staff." Having been a trustee and understanding education to a degree, I am having difficulty believing we could approach it from that angle.

Mr. Lennox: I have been in several situations—one, for example, when I was at Leaside High School—where the parents believed that in the junior grades the students should be taking their math, their English, their science and so on every day; therefore, it was their wish and the belief of the staff that taking all your subjects every day for all year was a good thing, especially in those first years where you got your study habits, your skills and so on down day after day.

Then, because in that particular school there was a strong emphasis on going to university, the feeling was that when you are studying the senior subjects, English, history, geography and so on, the longer chunks of time allow you to do more things in the classroom, both as a teacher and as a student. The mistakes you make as a 14-year-old are not compounded when you are an 18-year-old, and you can stack your grade 12 chemistry up against your grade 13 chemistry and do it in a continuous run, or your functions one semester and your calculus the next. That is one form of semestering where you can have both in the same school.

Some schools—especially in Scarborough, I believe—have a two-day cycle, which in effect is semestering, where you take half your program one day and half your program the next. That is seen as being the best of both worlds. You get your courses all year, your English and your

math all year, but you also get longer chunks of time to do your studying. If you wish to accelerate, you can take a subject every day rather than every other day and finish halfway through, then continue on in the second half.

For example, my daughter is in a school like that, and that is the way she is handling getting her English done; she will complete it in the four years. She is taking grade 11 English in the first half and grade 12 English in the second half; so I think there is some value in saying that the local community may have certain wishes or certain characteristics that they want reflected in their school, and that is one of the reasons we make that statement.

Mr. Jackson: As a comment, it is interesting that we would do it with the structure of the school, but we will not do it in terms of the same criteria of community in terms of standardized testing and various other forms. I am having difficulty understanding why we are so flexible and loose with something as substantive as the structure of the school day for a student, yet in how we monitor it we might wish even more flexibility and less consultation with the community.

Mr. Buckthorp: I do not think you will find it loose. Let us face it, the rush to semestering was a bandwagon after OSIS and it became, in some senses—

Mr. Jackson: I hate to interrupt you. You go so far as to say, in order to accommodate a goal of OSIS that students be able to graduate from secondary schools in four years rather than five. I rarely have seen it in print that the purpose of semestering was in order to accommodate the fast tracking solely. I thought that was an interesting comment.

Mr. Buckthorp: Not solely, but it was the only way that many schools could organize to allow—what OSIS requires is the opportunity for a student to get through in four years, and the semestering system offered the best opportunity for many schools. It was also, at the same time, a competition for students, especially in urban areas where, if your school was semestering and somebody else's wasn't, then it might lose students; so it became a competition factor as well.

Mr. Jackson: That is the situation I have. My board wants to go to semestering and it is doing so primarily because they are losing students at the senior level and they are not happy about it. The community wants to keep it because, of all the reasons that you described in a situation with

a high achievement, high university-bound expectation within the community, they are holding on to it like a sacred cow. It is up in the air who is going to win the battle.

Madam Chairman: We have Mr. Johnston, Mr. Reyecraft, Mr. Furlong and Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am very concerned by the statistics you gathered on the tech courses, and I want to come back to that, if I might, just briefly. I gather that 71 respondents indicated a problem in the area of finding teachers in those technological areas listed out of 340 who responded, is that right?

Mr. Lennox: That particular part of the survey, 323 principals responded and of the response, I guess in order to get the total response, you would have to add the 71, the 60, the 35, 28 and so on. These were areas where, this spring they were looking for a teacher and had difficulty finding this particular kind of teacher. There was not much difficulty in finding an English teacher, for example.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One of you, I cannot remember which right now, indicated that one of the facts of life is that that means a lot of letters of permission, or some, are being used rather than certificate teachers. What is the trend there? Do you have any information you can provide?

Mr. Irwin: I used the example of a welding teacher. We also had a problem with the foods teacher in another school. We were opening a foods program and we did not have a foods teacher. We went through the process and still did not come up with a foods teacher so we did have to go that route of hiring an unqualified person as far as teaching certification is concerned. Both these people are quite qualified as far as the trade is concerned, and that is an example in Lincoln county where we have 630 teachers total. Our concern is that that happened this year and Bob spoke of the window which closes in June 1989; many of our technical teachers who joined us in the 1950s will be retiring because they will take that window or they will be suffering in their pension.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: When are we going to get an idea about the pickup on the window? We all presumed that this last year would be the big year take-up and a lot of us presumed as well that people who came on in the 1950s would like to be the ones who would be availing themselves of it. I do not think we had thought about the implications in terms of technical teachers. When do you think we will get an idea of what

that is going to look like and how severe the deficit may be in the next year or two?

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Mr. Buckthorp: I assume by Christmas most teachers who are going to retire, and our principals can correct me on this, have indicated to their school board one way or the other, although some wait until the last minute before they give notice. Most principals are generally aware. I hope that our May survey would reflect some of that, but we do not have the data at the moment on it. We know that it is going to be a large bulge next year, and I know that certain boards that have had the teachers indicate to them already they were going to take the third year of the window are concerned about where they are going to get the teachers for those programs. I am sorry, I do not have the data.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It would be very useful information to be sent to the committee when you do get it back in, no matter whether we are in session or not. It would just be very helpful to us.

Mr. Buckthorp: I would be happy to. Also, the ministry has completed over the summer—I do not know whether it is releasable yet; I know that it is in an interim report form—a survey of teacher shortages and all the rest of it, and teacher requirements over the next few years, as part of the teacher education review. I do not know if you have the power to subpoena that—we do not—but I know it is not available publicly to us yet.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What is it called? Do you know?

Mr. Buckthorp: It was a study on the teacher shortages that the Ontario Teachers' Federation had requested and the teacher education review committee commissioned.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am sure the chair will be very happy, on our behalf, to ask the minister to provide the results of that study to us.

Madam Chairman: There is a member of the ministry staff in our audience today, so I am sure they are duly noting yet another generous request from Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Good, as is the parliamentary assistant. I think that would be very useful information for us. I do not know whether they have been able to get any projections about the window or not, but clearly that is fairly ominous in terms of the impact in the next year. What is the relationship of either associations like yourselves or the teachers' federation in general, with the colleges and the faculties of education, in terms of being able to say, "We

identified through this kind of a survey these 70 concerns"? What is your emphasis on those 70 spots you have in those two colleges, or whatever the exact number is? Are the people who are coming out of that going to be the people who are going to match your needs? What is your linkage in terms of any planning and co-ordination, or is there any?

Mrs. Moore: We sit on a variety of committees, and so a part of our job as Ontario Secondary School Principals' Council members would be to ensure that we are carrying that message. For instance, I sit on the program advisory committee with the ministry and a message that I will put out there from OSSPC is the great concern that we have as to teacher shortages and the needs in specific areas. That is a message that we will always carry to the various committees that sit, and of course through our own personal contacts that we have with the faculty too. We will be coming in there where we directly contact and relay the message again. So it is done more in that format rather than, I guess, in the official format as a large group.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Has there been any planning group meeting with ministry people, federations, associations and the faculties to talk about the impact of the window and other things in terms of the numbers of places that are to come up?

Mr. Buckthorp: A major place where that occurred was at the teacher education review meeting that was held, at the Guild Inn I think it was—whatever it is; out in Scarborough. I would like to commend Frank Clifford and the ministry people. That is one of the most exciting processes I have been involved in, and to my knowledge it is almost the first time in Ontario's history that all the parties of education have sat down together to discuss common concern issues like the teacher education.

We did make the point of the teacher shortages coming up. The faculty simply responded by saying it had no funding for the courses. But we have, on a continuous basis over the past three or four years, tried to get access through our OTF reps. Each affiliate from OTF has a rep on one of the faculties, but that does not give us any access to the faculties as such. Over the past year we have been trying to get more access to that, and also to the colleges. Graham Collins from the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario, has been very co-operative in talking about how we can have more co-operation with the faculties to address this problem.

One of the areas that I would like to see us address, with the ministry as well as with the faculties, is whether, in terms of dropouts, the apprenticeship program should be looked at involving unions, and other groups would be involved in that, to see whether we can create a continuum through the high schools and secondary schools into the community colleges that the students would actually see leads to something; because right now Alan King's studies also show that a student might as well drop out in grade 10 because if he goes on to grade 12 in the general level, since the public generally does not regard is as highly as the advanced level, he says: "What is the point? I can get two more years of money. Then if I come back in, I can come back in on a Futures program and get paid to be in school."

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I was going to raise that with you because I remembered that about the King study, and yet I think it was you but I cannot remember, one of you said that the increase that seems to be taking place now in the tech courses, after the initial drop off, part of it at least is due to re-entry people. Then you have also made comments that a number of people now are entering, dropping out and re-entering etc. over a period of time maybe as many as six years or longer. I am wondering why they are doing that when the King study said that there really is not much difference in terms of their employability or the level of employability whether they come out with a few credits, say the 16 or so that you were talking about or the full 27, in terms of what they are going to end up with. I am wondering about what seemed to me to be a slight contradiction in terms of their motivation. I wonder if you could talk about that at all.

Mr. Irwin: Motivation is in the workplace, because many times today entry into the workplace is a grade 12 diploma. We have many people in the workplace without that grade 12 diploma. We find that they are returning to school to get the grade 12 diploma through maturity credits and through various programs such as Futures part-time. I have been involved with the Futures program and the part-time education and I think it is a good thing. We worked it out between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Skills Development. It has been very effective in areas where the alternative method of learning has taken place. So that 24-year-olds can return to school, get their diploma and of course under OSIS with the 12 maturity credits it is a great push towards that diploma as well.

We find that the phenomenon out there now is that the 24-plus students are returning to school. We have had people return in their 50s to get their grade 12 diploma, despite the fact that they may be retiring in three or four years. They still like to have that piece of paper. It is more important to them.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Are they going to you for that or are they going to the colleges?

Mr. Irwin: They are coming back to the secondary schools as well as the colleges. The principal of a secondary school can recommend a diploma, no one else can. That is why they are returning to secondary schools.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just one final. I am trying to get this idea in my mind of who is taking tech courses now. What is happening to those students who did not opt into tech in grade 9 or grade 10 for the reasons you have indicated in terms of the restrictions on what their actual choices can be and now they are in grade 11 or 12 and would like to try to get some of those courses. How much of that which was predicted earlier would take place, how much of the take-up in tech courses is actually people entering it when they are at the grade 11 level in other things? Is that happening much or is that pretty isolated?

Mrs. Moore: Just a response speaking for my own school; yes, that is occurring and we do have entry courses for them at that grade 11 level, so they are not going back in with the grade 9 students, but rather they can then go into say wood courses, auto shop at grade 11 level. That helps them as they come back into the school. They are then willing to take the course; otherwise they would refuse.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I was wondering though, because somebody mentioned this yesterday, is that happening across the province; a grade 11 entry level into tech courses is available in most jurisdictions?

Mrs. Moore: We are not seeing large numbers. I do not have any stats.

Mr. Buckthorp: I think it is available. I would say it is not a huge process but it is available because the senior people want students in their programs and so they are willing to work with them to bring them through.

Mr. Lennox: If you are an enterprising department head or technology teacher and you wish to hold your enrolment, you will find ways of providing an introductory course to something at grade 11. In some schools it is successful.

Mr. Irwin: In my experience we are finding that it is not necessarily the adolescent who is

returning to those senior division courses, but there are dropouts re-entering with a specific thing in mind. The adolescent does not have a career in mind at this stage. Perhaps that is where we are falling down, whereas when they are returning after being out in the workplace six months, two years, they have a career or determination of what they want to do and they are returning to these programs that do not have prerequisites.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: How can we get statistical information on that? You seem to be talking from experience and I am wondering if there is any way of finding out how many people taking a grade 11 tech subject for the first time are in fact re-entries rather than people who are still in the system. Is there any way of finding that out in any statistical way?

Mr. Lennox: Well we would not want to ask you to put it on the September 30 report.

Mr. Jackson: There is no room left.

1500

Mr. Irwin: We do have an OSIS survey, on which we have asked questions. We could possibly include such a question for this coming spring if you release access to that information.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just think it would be really fascinating to see.

Mr. Reyecraft: I wanted to ask Mr. Lennox a couple of questions about semestering. You indicated that you had responsibility for basic level students at one time. Does semestering hold implications for those students who are different from general level and advanced level students?

Mr. Lennox: From my experience, it has good and bad points, especially in the practical areas. We were involved with food shops, auto shops, welding shops basically and small appliance repair, and the longer period of time was really a vital part of the course. Once you get their interest and the student then is working on a project, it is pretty hard to get that lemon meringue pie ready in 40 minutes.

Mrs. O'Neill: There goes the lemon meringue pie.

Mr. Lennox: You know how to do that?

Mrs. O'Neill: I used to be a family studies teacher. Be careful.

Mr. Lennox: In that particular part of the curriculum, I think semestering was good, because the students could take an introductory course, they had the time to do it and then, if they were interested, they could follow it up in the next semester.

I had the privilege of teaching some of them history, geography and English. Teaching geography in a semester situation to an advanced student is a treat because you can put projects together that take the full 80 minutes. Teachers who work with me found it difficult in some cases to keep a basic level program student alive and well for 80 minutes. So what we ended up doing in some situations was that we would back-to-back the math and science class, for example. So they would come to you for 40 minutes and then they would move on to science. So we sort of unsemestered some of what we would call the traditional core subjects and then the longer period of time was available for the practical.

It takes a very good, innovative teacher with a lot of patience to teach core subjects, from my experience, to those kinds of students over a long period of time. On the other side, the technical teachers gets very frustrated in the short period of time. They want the longer period of time.

Mr. Irwin: Can I comment on semestering versus long periods of time? Semestering and long periods of time are not synonymous. But you can have, as Mr. Jackson mentioned, a mixture. That is strictly up to the structure and the administrative ability of that team and that school to set that up. You can have semestered or unsemestered periods, you can have long and short periods. It just takes innovative timetabling to do that.

One of the problems we have, of course, is the concept of the credit in 120 hours. That could be a problem. But when you get into general studies and develop a method of credit for general study, you could use longer or shorter periods and unsemestered and semestered. We should never look upon semestering meaning necessarily a longer period, we should have both in any time structure.

Mr. Reycraft: Do you have any idea how common the procedure you just described, where you actually divided the semestered class, the longer class, into two for academic subjects to basic level students, is in the province? Is that something that is very common?

Mrs. Moore: I do not think we have a reading across the province on that. It will vary from board to board. There are some schools that may make the decision to do that individually. It is not a common approach in a board.

Mr. Reycraft: Is it likely that where schools do not follow that, where they do require basic level kids to study English, math or other

academic subjects for the longer period of time, that becomes a contributor to the dropout rate?

Mr. Lennox: I would not say that would be a rule of thumb. Again, I do not believe we have any statistics on that. From my limited experience with those kinds of programs, the school itself developed the system that seemed to fit best for those students. That was our solution and it seemed to retain the interest and hold the students for a longer period of time, so that is what worked best for us. I think a lot of basic level schools perhaps developed systems that seemed to be most appropriate for the kind of student they were dealing with.

Mr. Reycraft: My experience with them was that many of them endured the academic subjects because of the practical subjects, which they enjoyed, as you have indicated.

Mr. Lennox: I am sure that is true in some places too.

Mr. Reycraft: To think of having those periods double in length, it seems to me, would make it more difficult to keep them in school.

If I could move to another topic, and I realize we are short on time, I wanted to ask about streaming. You suggested that in reviewing streaming it might be more appropriate to examine certain subjects instead of taking a broad look at it. Is that not already being done in many cases? Are there not certain subjects that are offered at just a single level of difficulty instead of at all three?

Mr. Lennox: Yes, I believe there are.

Mr. Buckthorp: Basically you are looking at multilevel, multigrade courses where, because the composite school, for instance, has only a very few basic level students, they are put in with the general level and the teacher has to try to deal with both of them in one area. There are few subjects that OSIS requires to be offered at three levels of difficulty.

Our concern, when we expressed that statement you referred to, is that we not constantly look at jumping one way or the other on a pendulum, where you are either at one extreme or the other; you are streamed or unstreamed. The system is now streamed in a form of the levels of difficulty—it has been for a long time—and there may be solutions other than just jumping to unstreamed.

We are too used to watching American fads, backed up by huge research projects, and then 10 years later, when we have implemented it, they are throwing it out because it did not work or they are finding that median ground. I think maybe we

should be looking at the median ground or other solutions, rather than just going one way or the other.

I am well aware that even within our own organization there will be almost an even split on streamed or unstreamed in terms of how people view the systems. We are also well aware that politically, emotionally, an unstreamed system is something that is easier psychologically to present to the public, but in terms of what it does for the students, I think we are going to have to be more careful in looking at whether there are other solutions than just going one way or the other for the students.

I have been in too many classrooms where something like a streamed system would have harmed some students in the sense of how they approach certain issues. When I taught at Danforth Technical School, for instance, I was always appalled by the expectations of those students, not so much from the teachers but from the public, and the fact that it was a technical school and therefore somehow less worthy than North Toronto Collegiate Institute. I found those students wonderful and I thought they had a lot of potential, but the public attitude towards that was still that they were somehow less.

I do not know how we get around that. It does not matter what label you put on something, somebody in the public, the students themselves or the parents or the board or the politicians or the media somehow puts a label on it, and as soon as you put a label on it somebody feels insulted. I do not know how we get around that. We have such a variety of students with a variety of abilities that somewhere along the line we have to be able to approach them.

Forgive me, I am not pleased.

Madam Chairman: You are certainly forgiven.

Mr. Furlong: You indicate that the learning materials and resources process is not fully implemented at this stage. I am wondering if you could give us some idea of where it is at in terms of phases.

As a follow-up to that, do you have a timetable that you can look forward to and say, "The documentation and the materials will be in place in a year, two years, three years"? You make a recommendation that we not evaluate the process until these are ready and I am just wondering what kind of a time frame we are working with.

1510

Mr. Buckthorp: The one document that I held up yesterday that you said you did not have was just that. It was a ministry document, so I am sure

Mrs. O'Neill can get it for you easily or I can send it down. I did not bring it back with me today. I can very easily send it down to you if you want it. We would be happy to send it to you. What I have here is the one entitled Curriculum Documents 1988: Secondary. There are several coming in 1988 and several more in 1989, so the documents are not even implemented yet. Schools have been planning for it, of course.

Mrs. Moore: They are in an outline of documents to come.

Mr. Furlong: To come. So what are we looking at? You say there are some in 1988, some in 1989. Are we looking at 1990, 1991?

Mrs. Moore: The intent is to follow that guideline. There are sometimes some reasons why a new program may circumvent the intent. For instance, the phys ed document was to come through at a certain time. Because of the new AIDS program that was to be put into place at that time, it meant that the phys ed program had to be moved on. So you will find some interruptions in the intent as well.

Madam Chairman: Just before our panel goes, I would like to briefly ask you two questions, both statistically related. Betty mentioned the phenomenon of the dropin, the fact that once young adults drop out that does not mean the education cycle has seen the last of them, that quite often they drop in not only once or twice but sometimes even three times. Does OSSTF or OSSPC have any statistics at all on dropins, because from the time of Radwanski I have seen all sorts of statistics about dropouts but nobody seems to be looking at the countervailing side?

Mr. Buckthorp: I think when Radwanski first started we commented several times that the definition of "dropout" would vary according to who was asking, the same as the definition of "literacy;" or the definition of when you say "back to basics" what do you mean by basics? Everyone seems to have a definition. We would like to get some common agreement.

On that particular issue of the dropouts, no, there are no statistics. That is one reason the dropout situation in this province is not as bad as Radwanski's statistics would make it seem, because he used a single definition, without the ifs, ands or buts. As soon as you put the ifs, ands and buts in, they are not there. I do not know if the ministry is trying to do that now, but we have not accumulated those statistics.

Madam Chairman: The second question related to the faculties. Yesterday OSSTF told

us, and you have substantiated that today with your very helpful preliminary report at the back of your submission, that there is at this time—and there will certainly be more of a crisis in the future—a shortage of tech, business, math, science and French immersion teachers. Correspondingly, on the other side, are they turning out of the faculties a surplus in other areas or are we basically just meeting the needs in other areas of education?

Mr. Buckthorp: For a while they were outputting a surplus. A lot of those people have found jobs in business and industry. Whether they are now willing to come back into teaching, now that we are facing a shortage, I do not know. There may be a pool out there in business and industry which is anxious to go into the classroom. According to a newspaper report yesterday, for a lot of people it was a second career as opposed to their first choice but they are happily there. I think it is possible that there are a lot out there waiting to come back in but nobody knows how many. The faculties at the moment are producing a surplus in most subject areas. For a long time English, for instance, was a glutted area.

Again, it varies according to whether you are in Wawa or whether you are in Toronto. In Toronto, I think there was one position I heard of that had 3,000 applications. How do you even weed through the applications? Yet Wawa might have trouble getting any applications. It varies around the province.

Mr. Lennox: It also varies from time to time as well. I needed an English and social science teacher the last week of August and would have had to go to the Globe and Mail to get one if I had not been able to find someone on our occasional-teacher list. I never expected at all that in all of Metro Toronto there would not have been a surplus English and social science teacher, but there was not one available.

Madam Chairman: So there is a possibility that the problem is not so much that there is going to be a serious shortage of teachers but perhaps that a number of them will not match the areas in which we need teachers. Would that be accurate or do you think there is also going to be a severe shortage of teachers overall, in all areas or most areas?

Mr. Buckthorp: We are told by trends from the United States that there will be a severe shortage overall. Again, that depends on whether the people are willing to come back from business and industry into the system. I think the study the ministry has done may show some of

that, but I have not seen the study so I cannot swear to that.

Mrs. O'Neill: These things are not all a great, big surprise that happened overnight. There were studies out there 10 years ago that could tell how many people were going to be retiring in many of these subject areas. The crunch, certainly in the foods area for instance, was well predicted, as was the tech area. I think it has been a little more severe in the tech area than people would have anticipated. I think it is just a case of keeping up with research and the candidates to the faculties not wanting to go into the subject areas where they are sometimes needed or not being either trained for them or attracted to them.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Or not a lot of spaces available for them.

Mrs. O'Neill: This is sometimes the case. But I also know there are areas in the faculties that are begging. I happen to be very interested in the foods area. They are begging for applicants to come, but it is not a popular subject area at the universities nowadays. Those things are something we really are going to have an awful lot of trouble doing. It starts at the high school level with career choices basically, before we go into the faculties at all, before they actually enter university, the people who are interested in faculties. It is a very complex problem. It comes down very neatly statistically, but solving it is not quite as neat.

Madam Chairman: That is usually the way. I would very much like to thank the council members for sharing their wisdom and collective expertise with us today.

Our next presenters will be a joint submission by the Conference of Independent Schools and the Canadian Educational Standards Institute. Come forward, please.

Welcome to our committee as we pursue our review of the educational process in Ontario; semestering—I have all my little notes here. Thank you. The vice-chairman has just reminded me of what the others were. I thought I had them memorized down pat. Semestering, grade promotion, streaming and OSIS.

Please introduce yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard. We have allocated an hour for your presentation, I believe. No, I am sorry; half an hour for your presentation. We would suggest you have the first 15 minutes for your oral presentation and reserve some time for questions. After reading your brief, I am sure there will be a number of questions by the members. Please proceed whenever you are ready.

CONFERENCE OF
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
CANADIAN EDUCATIONAL
STANDARDS INSTITUTE

Dr. Symons: Thank you, Madam Chairman. My name is Tom Symons. I am a teacher at Trent University in Peterborough. I am the chairman at the present time of the Canadian Educational Standards Institute.

I would like to introduce my colleagues. On my right is the Reverend Ann Tottenham, the head of Bishop Strachan School in Toronto. On my far left is Sheldon Clark, the chairman of the Conference of Independent Schools and the head of Pickering College in Newmarket. On my immediate left is Roger Henderson, a director of the CESI and a former assistant head of Crescent School.

As you mentioned, our submission is a joint submission. It is on behalf of the Conference of Independent Schools and the Canadian Educational Standards Institute. Perhaps I should say just a word about each of these organizations.

1520

The Conference of Independent Schools is the association of Ontario's traditional independent schools, of which there are now 28 that belong to the conference. These are listed in appendix 1 of the brief to the select committee on education. Some of the schools are comparatively young, founded in the last 15 years to 20 years. Others have histories that date back to the early part of the 19th century.

While they have much in common, they have not always been actively associated as they tend to be rather more today, but they have, over the last few decades, joined together on a number of matters, particularly in making presentations to public commissions. So there is precedent for what we are doing here today.

The last occasion was when we were invited to make presentations to the Shapiro Commission on Private Schools in Ontario. We made two submissions to that body and they are attached as appendix 3 to our brief. They are the material that we would have presented to your committee, I think, if we had been presenting to the first phase, which was more concerned with the philosophy, I think. Those twin briefs are concerned with the philosophical concerns of the independent schools. Our brief today is aimed more specifically at the applied and immediate questions that you invited opinion on in your public advertisement.

It might be worth summing up in a sentence or two the essence of the briefs that we made to the

Shapiro commission, which outline the philosophical common ground for the 28 schools that belong to the conference. That is simply that we believe it is very important that there be an independent option in education, that there not be a state monopoly on education, that there ought to be variety and diversity in education, just as we feel there ought to be in society in all its aspects. With that in mind and a concern for the freedom of various forms in education, freedom in all sorts of matters of curriculum and recruitment, we express great caution about public funding if it were extended to the independent schools. We simply recall the adage that he who calls the tune pays the piper.

The other organization is composed of members of the conference and some others who came together two years ago to start the Canadian Educational Standards Institute.

The purpose of this institute, which I think may, over time, make quite an important contribution in Canadian education, is to encourage both in those member schools and elsewhere the highest academic standards, to develop a system of evaluation and accreditation for independent schools that may be of assistance to other elements in the educational system, and to foster professional growth.

The institute's board is made up of four representatives from the member schools and four educators from outside, of whom I am one, who are not directly associated with the schools.

The program of accreditation and evaluation, which has some 40 or more component parts, has been carefully planned and is now well under way. A number of schools have in fact been evaluated and visited, reports have been prepared and recommendations have been made and well received.

The first two schools have been accredited under this program and currently eight more are preparing to undergo the process of visitation, evaluation and possibly accreditation.

Our schools, while only 28 in number, do in fact educate some 12,500 students, about 20 per cent of all the students who attend independent schools in Ontario.

On page 2 of our brief, in paragraph 4, there is a listing of some of the distinguishing characteristics of the schools. All are nonprofit organizations. All are managed by a board of governors and those boards operate at arm's length from the school administration. All of these schools—I am compressing a little—view education in the broadest sense. They are concerned not only with intellectual development but with the emotional,

cultural and general development of the student. All share a concern about certain basic freedoms—freedom to govern themselves, to decide what they teach to the extent possible and so on.

None the less, our schools are very much a part of Ontario's educational mosaic. Over the decades they have made, I think, a very helpful contribution to education in Ontario because of the opportunity they have to innovate, to experiment and to follow diverse routes. They pioneered the introduction of guidance in schools in Ontario, a great deal in the area of women's education and in the teaching of art, music, drama and physical education. They have done a great deal, I believe, in experimenting in the field of teachers' professional development.

Having said that, moving to page 3 of the brief, there is, none the less, a great deal of diversity among the schools that belong to the institute and the conference. We think this diversity is tremendously important, both in the group of schools concerned and in the educational system itself. All our schools seek to excel, but each has its own unique culture and approach which contribute not only to their own students but to education in the province.

We ventured to respond to your invitation to make a submission because we feel there may be some perspectives we can offer. The first is an alternative to the public system. Second, we found with interest that our schools have for a long time had in place quite a number of the recommendations which were contained in the Radwanski report.

For example, a few brief observations: The independent schools have generally kept a dynamic balance between continuity and change. In the discussion you have had in your committee and that we have just finished hearing, there is, we believe, a great need for balance, and for a balance that, on the one hand, respects tested values and builds on what has been found to be useful and, on the other hand, recognizes that there is a constant need to search for improvement and to be open to change and experiment in the educational system.

The second major observation is that there is value in the fact that our member schools are directly—not indirectly—accountable to the parents who pay the fees. Our schools really do listen, as they must, to what parents say. When parents speak to the head of one of our independent schools, they are speaking directly to the person with the authority to effect changes. It is partly because of these factors that our schools have experienced really quite a remark-

able increase in demand, reflected in the growth in enrolments in the 1970s and 1980s.

We are concerned, and I pick up a point from the speaker on the last panel before you, to caution about the need to make haste intelligently sometimes, therefore slowly; to build from where we are and to avoid swings of the educational pendulum unnecessarily. Of course, change and improvement are necessary, but we rather liked the point made by one of your earlier presenters, a member incidentally of our institute board, Walter Pitman, that the system is definitely not running on empty.

We sympathize with another of your presenters earlier, Duncan Green, who commented that sometimes one wonders how the plant grows when it is pulled up so frequently to see how its roots are doing. We want to suggest that the system does not again need its roots pulled up. It does, however, require some critical and constructive attention.

One of the points that is in the air is the slightly trendy phrase that the emphasis in educational philosophy in Ontario should be shifted from process to outcomes. If taken literally, that is a recommendation to pluck the system up by its roots and perhaps to lead us to abandon what we have learned in recent years about delivering humane and caring teaching, meeting individual needs and developing self-worth.

1530

Our group feels that the education system does not need to move from process to outcomes. It does need, however, to find a better balance between the two and to raise the expectations of achievement. A great deal has been learned in recent years about how children learn and the varieties of style and stages in learning, about the importance of student self-worth; to turn away from these new understandings would be regressive.

But there is an imbalance. This situation may have led us in our educational system to de-emphasize the importance of fostering excellence to the full extent of the student's ability. We may have become hesitant to challenge the student's ability and respond to situations where students are having difficulty by lowering our expectations and lowering their expectations and, in doing so, doing them a disservice. If our children are not challenged, how can they grow? They will not be challenged if we keep modifying the system so that they are asked to learn only what is easily mastered rather than what is difficult and requires extra effort.

On the specific questions of grade promotion, streaming and semestering, we would suggest that all of these relate to the need for balance and the need for a dynamic balance. Grade promotion or social promotion, as it is sometimes called, provides a good illustration of these things. The recommendation in Mr. Radwanski's report is that we should raise our expectation of student achievement and should do something to help students who are falling behind. We concur entirely in this instance with his recommendation. Holding children back rarely produces success and often complicates and adds to their problems. On the other hand, simply promoting them and hoping something will click may hinder their progress too and make it more difficult for them to reach their potential.

There is not a simple answer in that matter. It is not either yes or no; very few of these questions are susceptible to yes or no. But we would argue that sympathy is not enough. In situations like this, what is needed is what we do our best to do in the schools in the conference and that is to assist the student in as personal a way as possible.

Similarly, this question of the importance of challenge in education relates to the question of streaming, which has been recommended in some sources should be abolished. We are not sure about that. We would suggest that it is not streaming per se that is the problem. Indeed, if streaming were suddenly abolished, I think it would be a disaster for the public system. Clearly, though, a system which appears to be alienating large numbers of young people, particularly in their adolescent years, does need to be carefully examined.

It is alarming, for instance, that the disadvantaged effectively become even more disadvantaged over time as a result of some of the arrangements in our educational system, including some of the consequences some of the time of streaming. Rather than seeing difficulty as a call for more help and more attention, often the system now simply lowers its expectations of students who are not achieving. If they then succeed, it is considered to be a success for them and for the system, and it is actually a failure for them and for the system. Students who are not meeting basic competencies need help and attention. They do not need to be betrayed by a withdrawal of attention and by artificially lowered standards. They do need smaller classes, for example. They will need more teacher time.

We caution against the total abolition of streaming and suggest that is not the way to find the answer at all. If you replace streaming with a

completely undifferentiated set of expectations for all students, there would be an extraordinarily unfair and unimaginative situation, both for the teachers and for the students. Teachers who are already so often overburdened will have an even greater problem in dealing with the wider variety of achievement levels in the one classroom. Simply mixing students who are now in advanced and basic streams does run a risk of causing more, not less, alienation in less competent students and causing strong academic students to look for higher quality elsewhere.

Semestering is the third specific topic of the committee. I should perhaps explain briefly that very few of our schools offer semestered programs, in spite of the tremendous popularity of such programs in the public system. Many of the heads of our schools believe that semestering is inappropriate to some of the subjects that are best learned through a steady accumulation of knowledge and skill and through daily practice. Most of our schools are concerned about disruption of their sense of community and of the structure also of the extracurricular programs. None the less, there is a range of opinion and emphasis on the matter of semestering in our schools.

With regard to OSIS, there are several points that we comment on briefly. On one matter, all our member schools are unanimous. We strongly welcome the return to the sensible balance between compulsory credits and freedom of choice in options. The ministry has, through OSIS, adopted a position similar to that of our member schools, which has been in practice for more than 25 years.

On the other hand, we view with concern some calls that are in the air for the virtual elimination of choice and the narrowing of students' educational experience. Yes, the Ontario educational system needs a core of common learning and common skills, but no, not to the exclusion of individuality and diversity. In fact, we think the current balance, as expressed in OSIS, is about right.

A major concern, however, for many of our schools is not OSIS itself. It is what has come with it—an increasing move towards centralized prescription of curriculum content and the resultant discouragement and disfranchising of the individual teacher in the classroom.

At the Ontario academic course, OAC, level, responsible curriculum innovation is being actively discouraged, if not altogether banned. Little or no innovation is allowed at the OAC level. One of our schools, for example, has for

years offered the international baccalaureate theory of knowledge as a course for credit towards the honours graduation diploma. This is no longer allowed under the inflexibility of the OAC arrangements; yet it is an internationally recognized course and it has led a number of the schools' graduates into the further study of philosophy.

In another instance, and I simply cite examples of this discouragement of innovation, one of our member schools developed a truly imaginative course merging literature, art and music. It was highly acclaimed by professional educators; it won a Marshall McLuhan Distinguished Teacher Award, selected by a panel of distinguished educators. Yet it was banned the next year by the Ministry of Education because it was not part and did not fit comfortably with its prescribed program.

Regrettably, the message from all this is one of discouragement for experiment and innovation. The fact is that education takes place in the classroom. So much depends on the quality, the enthusiasm, the commitment, the imagination and, really, the freedom of the teacher. Rather than undermining teacher initiative, we urge the need to empower teachers by enabling and encouraging them to revise the content and the methods in their teaching in their classrooms to meet the specific needs and the interests of the students in their charge. We argue that the move to centralize control strips teachers of responsibility and of the chance to have an impact and to be of greater service to their students.

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In conclusion, we make, with respect, five recommendations, and they are all implicit in the points I have presented to you in the presentation.

1. That the education system should beware of overemphasizing outcomes to the exclusion of process—a dynamic balance is needed.

2. That the system should raise its expectations of student achievement and that schools will need and somehow must be given the resources to help those students who are falling behind.

3. That streaming in the secondary system should not be jettisoned but that inferior expectations of basic and general levels should be abandoned and a commitment should be made to raising the levels of excellence in all streams through improved teaching strategies and increased attention to individual student needs.

4. That teacher creativity and initiative should be encouraged in every possible way, which is perhaps the most important message we wish to convey to the committee.

5. That the increasing trend towards centrally and rigidly prescribed curriculum should be re-evaluated and that provision should be made to encourage responsible curriculum innovation by individual schools and academic departments and teachers.

In closing, we would observe that the government's responsibility to provide an environment to good education is, of course, an immense one. The demands are intense and recent criticisms have been severe. There clearly is a need for improvement. In this situation, we strongly recommend a dynamic balance between continuity and change.

Thank you, Madam Chairman. We are grateful for the opportunity to meet with you and your committee and welcome any questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Professor Symons. The committee is grateful that you have appeared today. Mr. Johnston is first on the list.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I do not think 20, 24 or 25 years ago I ever expected to be in the position of putting questions to my president at Trent University, but it is a pleasure to do so. I am looking for a couple of straight factual things about your schools, just for my information, around streaming. Does streaming take place within your schools and, if so, can you give me some idea as to the percentage of basic level students and general level students, that kind of thing? Can you give me some of that basic information?

Ms. Tottenham: Our schools are mainly advanced level and general level schools and within that mainly advanced levels. I personally do not know if there are any basic level courses in our association. I do not think there are. My own school, for instance, offers only advanced level courses because we see ourselves as a university preparatory school, so there is no sense doing anything else.

When you talk about streaming, I think schools have different approaches. Our school does not stream because in a sense we have already streamed in our admissions process, but within that we do provide accelerated sections, that sort of thing. I know there are schools within our association which have general level programs, which have special English-as-a-second-language programs, that sort of thing.

Mr. Clark: On page 2 of the report, paragraph 4, item (b), more or less states the general type of program in the Conference of Independent Schools. I concur with Ms. Tottenham that we try to support the students who are admitted

where they need help and accelerate where they show promise.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The structural notion of streaming, that is, to gear a certain group of students into a set of subjects from which certain outcomes are absolutely necessary and transitions from one level to another, especially upward, are very difficult, seems in some sense to be antithetical to the way your schools work as a community; acceleration or remediation is different from streaming, if I can make that distinction. That is why I wonder why you are so strongly taking the position you are on streaming.

I am not clear on the evidence myself. Yesterday we had a Catholic school board in Waterloo come before us talking about how streaming was not possible for it to consider. They thought it contrary to the philosophy of their system. They obviously had the full range of students from basic on through, but they tried as much as possible to maintain an integration in their classes to mainstream people, and not to segregate them. They seem, from their analysis, to be successful in that way, yet we are getting other evidence coming forth saying that the basic-level school is a necessary element within the secondary level. That is why I was wondering why it was you had come down specifically, quite strongly, on anti-streaming.

Ms. Tottenham: Most of our schools are very small in terms of public education. I think the largest of our schools has about 1,000 students and that is far larger; the smallest of our schools has 85 or 90 and the rest of us are somewhere in between.

I think it is very important for us to be clear about what kind of education we are giving. We cannot offer the full range of variations that a much larger school could, so I think it is important that we do not stream. In a sense, we stream by admissions, because we present a certain kind of program and we then look for the students who can fit that program, but once we have them in, we do not do a lot of streaming. I do not know; I am not making much sense.

Mr. Henderson: Could I add to that? I think our schools deal with a lot of bright, academically talented students, but I think, on the other hand, most of our schools would be quite upfront in saying, "We have some average, just nice kids." I think we suspect, and there is no way of knowing, that some of the students in our schools might well have ended up in general level in the public system, but with the extra help, attention,

time and care, we keep them in the academic stream and they go on to university and do fine.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The reason I was raising it was that many of my friends—we went to Trent University afterwards—had gone to Lakefield College School and others, for remediation, essentially. They were not doing well in the public system and for disciplinary reasons or whatever, their parents sent them to schools within your group and they were very much a part of the mainstream. That is the only reason I wanted to raise it.

The thing I noted, and you did elaborate on it, Dr. Symons, was your number 30, your concerns about OSIS, lack of flexibility in terms of curriculum, etc. I wondered if you had examples. You came up with two that I think were very illustrative of the problem.

Can you tell me what the difference is, essentially, between constraints that were on the schools you operate before OSIS as compared with now. Is this a very dramatic change for you or did this sort of thing take place in the past in terms of recognition of certain courses and that kind of thing?

Ms. Tottenham: There was a provision whereby schools could get permission to teach—was it called an experimental course, Mr. Henderson? I cannot remember. There was a provision under the old system whereby you could make a proposal for a course that was not in HS1 and you were given permission by the ministry on a three-year shot, or whatever, to be able to offer this course. At the time OSIS arrived, we had three such courses in our repertoire. Of course, we had to abandon them. We are not a particularly experimental school, so I suspect that others of my more venturesome colleagues had even other courses in that line.

Dr. Symons: Yes, there has been a distinct tightening up and a growth of rigidity. A number of our schools have had experiences like the two I have cited. It crops up in particular if you have highly experimental or different focuses. For example, some of the admirable work done by the Toronto French School naturally is different; that is the purpose of the school. There are schools that are developing these internationally oriented programs, not just the international baccalaureate that I have referred to, but there are other variations. There are really many hundreds of examples; I just picked out two.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Is it possible for you to give us, not now but at a later date, a listing of other kinds of examples where this has come up? That might be very helpful if we could have that.

Also, can you tell us what you do in that position? You say you give up the course, but is there a process that is there for you to be able to argue and present your appeal to the ministry why this particular course would be appropriate and should be considered for credit?

1550

Ms. Tottenham: One of the problems our schools have had is that we are dealt with in a somewhat arbitrary fashion by the ministry. This is not get-the-ministry day, but each school has its own ministry inspector. Depending on what your inspector says, that is what you are allowed to do. The inspectors do not, it seems, have a great degree of unanimity, so that one school will be told one thing and another school will be told another. This leads to much frustration.

As I understand it, there is a process where you can push your way up to the top of the ministry through the inspectors, but it is not an easy one and it is not encouraged. Many of us, I think, felt that we were going to have our hands full implementing OSIS, and that perhaps the thing to do was to get it implemented properly and then look at where we should go next.

Dr. Symons: It is an important point, I think, that the first reply would have to be that there is not a clear procedure. That may be part of the problem. But then the general atmosphere of deterrents to experiment and initiative is probably more important than the specific instances of turning down or pulling the rug out from under programs, although those are two very clear-cut and striking ones that I have mentioned.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other matter you have just alluded to is also very serious. You are saying that the people who basically have responsibility for the ministry are operating under different premises in terms of interpretation of what OSIS allows and does not allow. That also is problematic.

Ms. Tottenham: This is something we have discussed with them on numerous occasions. I think they are trying to work on it. It has been a problem, would you not say?

Mr. Henderson: Yes. The problems arises, I guess, especially when a school gets a different inspector each year and each inspector has different emphases, so the school needs to adjust to those emphases on almost a yearly basis. Some progress has been made in letting us have the same inspector for several years in a row. The ministry is trying to work on that. I guess that has been our major problem.

Dr. Symons: One of the real reasons for establishing this Canadian Educational Standards Institute is not only to foster development and initiative in our own schools, but to seek to put in place some kind of arrangement that will reassure the ministry and others that these schools are doing an admirable job—and they are—and that they have great concern for standards and that because of this there ought to be a little less reluctance to allow them to experiment and innovate.

Madam Chairman: We will go to Charles Beer as our last questioner. I just mention that we have actually run over our time, so perhaps you could make it brief as a courtesy to our Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children group which is presenting next.

Mr. Beer: In noting presenters who are coming after, they may recall another committee at another time that was far worse than this committee in terms of running over time.

I should confess an interest up front as I have worked very closely with the four members of the panel over a number of years. I think I have some sense of where they are coming from. I am very glad they have come to make this presentation today because it seems to me, and this I think is reflected in the brief, that a lot of the concerns one finds among those in independent education are very similar to concerns, indeed, that are expressed and have been expressed before this committee by many who are very involved in public education.

I think that is something that should be obvious, but sometimes we tend to suggest that there are polar opposites here, when in fact we are all part of a larger educational mosaic and independent education does offer an alternative and an option. It certainly is never going to replace public education, nor do those in it suggest that or intend that. I welcome the fact that the institute and the conference came together to make this presentation.

I have two brief questions. The first is to both Mr. Clark and Ms. Tottenham. You talk in the brief about process and outcomes. Certainly, one of the discussions that is going on in the public system as well as in the independent area in terms of our standard is, how do we measure student achievement? What are your thoughts on doing that? Where is the balance that we should be seeking between returning to the sort of grade 13 departmentals and having no testing or no examination at all? What are you looking at in terms of your own schools in those two areas?

Ms. Tottenham: There is not a short answer to that, but I think our schools, as a whole, would welcome some sort of external standard that would assist us. We have claimed to be offering a superior kind of education, which we should be because we have superior conditions to do it in, yet it is very difficult to claim that, as we have no objective criteria.

It would be helpful to us to have some sort of standardized testing province-wide into which we could throw our students against the best. In that sense, I think that kind of testing of outcomes might be helpful. I would not look forward—I do not think any of us would—to the return to the old grade 13 type of exams where everybody just taught to the exam. This strangled any initiative and creativity. But I think some sort of external measurement of outcomes, on the whole, would be welcomed by our association, although I do not pretend to speak for everybody.

Mr. Clark: I certainly would not speak for everyone, but I think a current measurement of outcomes is the admissions to universities that occur right now. Virtually 90 per cent of graduates of the independent schools go on to university, and of that group, I would say, a very large percentage to the university of their choice. There is a disproportionate admission to university, if you will, because of the particular nature of these schools in offering the advanced placement programs. University admission, in and of itself, is an indication of achieving a recognized standard for admission to the major Ontario universities, and indeed world universities.

Second, we are concerned about the process of arriving at university admission, which is not only development of the intellect but of other attributes of the personality—spiritual, emotional, physical—and as a result of a combined emphasis in that manner, developing along the way an attitude of mind, an approach to the learning process that is certainly a valuable skill when it comes to staying in university. I would say, again, a great majority of our students not only arrive at the threshold of higher learning but manage to sit through the university process and graduate. That then becomes a secondary measurement of success.

Mr. Beer: Thank you. This is my last question. In your recommendation 2, you talk about the education system raising the “expectations of student achievement, and more important, that schools should be given the resources to help students who are falling behind.” I think it has been made clear that the bulk of the students

in the conference are advanced, some are general, and the mixing that goes on there—this goes back to Mr. Johnston’s question and I think this is quite true from my own experience—does allow many students who might have been caught at the general level to improve their skills.

I suppose from the point of view of the public system, which is dealing with a much broader group of students, the question is to what extent and how that could be implemented when we are talking about those with an even greater variety of skills, and in effect, many more whose level of ability may be quite a bit lower, presumably; what resources would be required to help those students; and this has come up in a number of the briefs—transition programs, transition courses and so on.

Do you think that recommendation, in the context of your comments about streaming, is realistic in the broader public system versus the one in which you are operating?

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Mr. Clark: If I may, I think it is incredibly realistic. Perhaps to look at it from a slightly askew angle might prove to be helpful. The odd angle is to consider the cost to the community of students who do not achieve in school, who develop, shall we say, alternative values and become burdens on society in a variety of ways which lead to all kinds of problems—I suppose, in one extreme, imprisonment; in another, early parenthood; in another, personal disfranchisement—so that their societal contribution is correspondingly reduced. That kind of cost is astronomical.

To provide, at some cost, educational resources which limit the size of basic and general education courses, which home in on English as a second language, as we are now into a very strong multicultural position, which promote with respect, honour and dignity technical education that is not specifically geared to the tech student but is open to other students as well, those kinds of uses of financial and human resources will reduce the tax burden and I think encourage an active participation on the part of budding citizens of tomorrow, who will take our places around this table.

I would suggest it is practical and realistic to look at ways of homing in on the specific problem areas, reducing the size of the classes, increasing the number of teachers who are allocated to the transition process and by so doing enfranchising those students who otherwise seem to be marked to disfranchisement.

Mr. Henderson: On the financial side of it, we do not have a great statistical base for our schools, though we will be developing it, and the comparisons are somewhat apples and oranges, but it is very interesting to note that the public cost per student in the secondary system is only a few hundred dollars less than our median tuition fee for day students. Again, I do not want to be specific on that because I do not have really hard numbers, but it is quite fascinating that they are not that far apart, yet we are able to pour on the human resources, the small classes, the good pupil-teacher ratio.

Dr. Symons: Madam Chairman, on behalf of my colleagues, I thank you and your colleagues very much for your kindness in giving us time this afternoon. We have appreciated it.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Professor Symons. I almost said President Symons there; a little slip of the tongue. We very much appreciate you sharing your comments with us today.

Patiently waiting for the last half hour has been the Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children. I think many of you may know it as Metrac. Perhaps Pat Marshall and Catherine Stewart would take a seat. Welcome back to the committee. Metrac made a presentation to the committee in our goals and philosophy section, so we are very much interested in hearing your comments today. Members have been given an advance copy of your brief and have read it. If you feel you would like to either summarize or highlight certain areas, please feel free to do so. Please begin whenever you are ready, after you have identified yourselves for electronic Hansard.

METRO ACTION COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Ms. Stewart: I am Catherine Stewart.

Ms. Marshall: I am Pat Marshall. Catherine will be doing the major presentation today. I am just here to comment on the importance of your committee's work for our committee in the general response and questions.

Ms. Stewart: First of all, I would like to say thank you very much for inviting us back. We are very pleased to be here. We certainly do welcome the opportunity to elaborate on some of the things that we brought to you in July.

In our first presentation, as you likely remember, we outlined the extent of the problem of abuse, its long-term and short-term effects and the role education could and should play in terms

of reducing the incidence of all forms of violence. We specifically stress the need to recognize root causes common to many of the social problems that schools are being asked to deal with and the need to develop a conceptual framework which incorporates the interconnectedness between these problems.

Today we would like to discuss how this conceptual framework can be realized through the curriculum. We appreciated from your office, Dianne, that we were within keeping with your agenda to broaden OSIS a bit to talk about other aspects and other curricula. We have chosen to address the topics that are before you in terms of how we see them in relation to abuse and that particular area.

We would like to talk today about not only how we think the goals we talked about last time should be manifested in subject matter, but also important, how we think they should be backed up in terms of policy, in structure, in professional development, in teaching methodology and support services and in the general community—in short, the school environment as a whole.

I would like to say—this is a bit of a reiteration, I know, but I think it bears re-emphasis—that we find unfortunate and largely unnecessary the increasing polarization between people who advocate a back-to-basics approach and those such as ourselves who advocate a more comprehensive approach. Of course, we are as concerned as anyone else that our children learn to read and write, but what we are saying is that they are not the only basics to be taught. The question has to be asked, what are the basics and by whose definition?

We think it is quite basic that our children be safe, that they know how to get their needs met in healthy and constructive ways and that they know how to get along with others. We contend that ignoring these basics does far more in preventing the learning of other basics than does their inclusion. We should be redefining basics and working towards what are common goals.

To date, the approach to dealing with abuse, including wife abuse, sexual assault, child abuse, drug abuse, etc., has generally tended to be one issue at a time, one-shot programming with an emphasis on a quick fix. Even where resource materials themselves are more comprehensive, their implementation usually is not.

As far as I have been able to observe at the elementary level, for instance, while there may have been limited attempts to integrate some of the topics that we have tried to introduce or have been introduced by various people in terms of

personal safety, assertiveness, etc., these attempts to integrate are quite limited.

Yet we know from experience that a program—for example, something that starts with a theatre presentation—brought in from the outside will be limited in terms of promoting early detection or prevention unless the messages it introduces are reviewed and reinforced. As one grade 6 student said directly after a play on sexual abuse: “If I were to be abused now, it would be easy to tell someone. But if no one is talking about this six months from now, it would become difficult again.”

At the secondary school level, these topics tend to be put into physical education and family studies if they are dealt with at all. The former is overloaded with issues, as I am sure you are well aware, particular now with the latest-acquired immune deficiency syndrome. Under OSIS the chance of students being exposed to these topics is even more unlikely. Family studies are not compulsory and are, therefore, only taken by a proportion of students. Abuse may be mentioned in passing in law or in other options but not dealt with consistently or in any depth.

Our concern is basically that topics related to abuse and its prevention are not only largely unavailable, but even where they are, the reality is that the vast majority of students get little or no exposure to them. In most school boards, the teaching of these topics is left up to the initiative of the individual school or teacher, meaning that there is no real way of measuring what and how much students are actually getting.

Students may be learning about one kind of abuse and learning little or nothing about others, while it is clear that many students, particularly male students, are not getting anything at all. If topics related to abuse are introduced in subject areas that are not compulsory, then they will continue to be marginalized at best and nonexistent at worst. As one co-ordinator of physical education said when asked to have programming on sexual coercion, “When it is in the curriculum we will teach it.”

We want to bring to your attention that a few years ago there was a course that was developed in personal life management which could have included a lot of the topics we are talking about. It was proposed to be mandatory and it was, in our minds, a step in the right direction. However, this course was eventually introduced as an option in a very watered-down version.

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While OSIS has provided solid and commendable goals—for example, sex equity—un-

fortunately, the way it is prioritized, curriculum content has limited the extent to which sex equity and topics related to abuse can be addressed and, therefore, the extent to which such goals can be realized. It is this very clear deficit, in our minds, that we hope the committee will acknowledge and deal with.

What we are proposing is a core curriculum that would address the skills, knowledge, behaviour and values necessary to understanding and preventing abuse in its many forms. Such a course would include such things as child sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; violence towards women; sexual assault and coercion; elder abuse; male-female socialization; personal safety; assertiveness; nonviolent effective communication and problem-solving skills; conflict resolution; relationships; healthy sexuality; parenting; child development; self-esteem and self-concept; death, including suicide; drug and alcohol abuse and so on.

Such a course would make clear the connections between these different topics and such a course would be mandatory, recognizing that these topics are not frivolous, to be dealt with after other more basic ones have been exhausted, but critical to the individual child as well as the society as a whole. In practical terms, the course could be an expanded version of an existing course like life skills, family studies or Challenge and Change in Society, or it could be an entirely new course.

Such a course, we would like to emphasize, however, would be next to meaningless unless the values presented find an echo in the values presented in other subject areas. We have given you some examples here of just how limited it will be if these values are contradicted in other ways. We are looking at teaching values that are incompatible with one person abusing another, and we want to see that permeate all aspects of the curriculum.

Similarly, the building of self-esteem, I think, must be the concern of all teachers and not the sole province of the life management teacher. Furthermore, some related topics will still need to be dealt with in other subject areas. For instance, sexual stereotyping and violence should still be addressed in media literacy programs. We still want to see some self-defence programs for women in physical education.

All of the topics mentioned above should have their beginnings in the elementary school. Although there have been some encouraging initiatives in this area—we have seen, for instance, the boys’ and babies’ program, where

boys have the opportunity to learn to care for babies—and although these programs are truly preventive, again, what is needed is comprehensiveness in planning so that it is not just one topic or one group of children that is getting something.

We want to see something that is sequential, we want to see something that is consistent and we want to see something that is effective. We want to see something that is not just in some boards or some schools or some classrooms or with some girls or some boys. We want to see something that every child in this province is getting and we can depend on the fact that they are getting this information.

In order for that to happen, we feel strongly that there needs to be co-ordination starting at the ministerial level so that these subjects, as we have identified them, are not compartmentalized, distributed to different individuals. Because of what we have talked about before, there is the need to have commonality in terms of preventive concepts established across the curriculum.

We also would like to see a framework established so that after that framework is established and people are clear about that, we can then get on with policy formulation, curriculum guidelines, resource development and program implementation.

We are pleased to see that the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward) announced that drug education would be mandatory. We would like to see it recognized formally that there is a connection between this and other forms of abuse. What we ask is, if that can be made compulsory, why cannot these other topics be made compulsory? I think we really have to look at how often it becomes a question of a stopgap measure, a kind of knee-jerk action or an "after the illness, now the remedy" approach in dealing with this area.

As we mentioned last time, we are just as concerned about how children are taught as about what they are taught. To us, process and outcomes are equally important and certainly not an either/or proposition, as we feel Radwanski, in his report, seemed to suggest. Given that self-esteem, a sense of autonomy, the ability to think and act independently, a sense of personal power and the ability to stand up for oneself are outcomes vital to the prevention of abuse, it is critical that these qualities are enhanced and encouraged in the individual child in the process of learning.

We are happy to see in ministerial documents like OSIS and the one on discipline a growing recognition of the importance of behavioural and discipline problems being handled in a way constructive to a child's sense of self-worth. We also support the increased emphasis on co-operative, collaborative learning that lends so much to children developing a sense of their own competence while at the same time learning to tolerate and appreciate the opinions of others and gaining the ability to work constructively with others towards common goals.

However, we are less positive about what we believe—what we have observed directly in our being in the schools—to be happening all too often at a practical level.

Last time we mentioned poisonous pedagogy. I know some members of your committee wanted a greater explanation of what poisonous pedagogy was about, so I have presented you with a synopsis or a taste of what it is about. Of course, I could not in half a page summarize Alice Miller's very extensive documentation to the effect I would have liked to have done. However, I think it stands as it is that what we are talking about is something that is not only very pervasive in our society in general but certainly is also reflected in our school system.

The rules that I did list here in terms of some of the techniques that are considered as part of poisonous pedagogy are probably pretty familiar to all of us. Certainly, we have found, for instance, that with rules like blind obedience being a sign of a good child and obedience making a child strong, these beliefs have had a great effect on children's vulnerability to abuse, because they are not likely to question the authority if they have never been taught to do so, even if that person is obviously doing something wrong. We are very concerned in terms of how pervasive this particular approach is and how it affects children and the final outcomes of that.

I have given you the example that one of the outcomes is hatred and how that hatred can then be translated or projected on to various groups, various individuals, towards oneself and so on. I think it is very important to look at this in terms of one more key in understanding things like sexism, racism and homophobia.

We know that through our child-rearing techniques that what happens is that very essential parts of the self are denied or painfully destroyed in a child as he is growing up. For example, often boys are taught, through ridicule, to deny, to devalue their feminine side. What happens as a result of that is that they eventually

despise all that reminds them of it, and we see sexual assault as being one expression of that contempt.

We also have been able to observe that when we see how teachers are relating to children, despite the emphasis on using different kinds of approaches to dealing with misbehaviour, for instance, we still see a very strong tendency to react punitively in ways that can be harmful to the esteem of the child, rather than looking for logical explanations and constructive ways of dealing with it.

We have mentioned policy and we have brought out here some of the policies that we think are very important that the ministry has been taking some leadership in, but again, we also would like to point out that there are very serious voids in policy, particularly as it affects the whole area of abuse. We have brought some examples to your attention, for instance, sexual harassment and even protocols governing what happens if a child comes forward.

It may surprise you to know that at this stage we still have teachers in the system who do not understand their reporting responsibilities. I can give you one, not an uncommon example but certainly a recent one, where a teacher asked me whether she should report a child who had disclosed to her that she had been sexually assaulted by her stepfather—this had happened six months before she was telling me the story—and whether or not that was reportable. She did not know that it was.

We are clearly seeing voids in policy, and even where there are policies teachers do not always know what they are. Also, what has happened since we last were before you is that the climate has escalated in terms of the general concern about false allegations, for instance. We would like to bring that to your attention because it is very much the atmosphere within which we are trying to get programs initiated or implement these programs in the schools.

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We are certainly very concerned with the fact that the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation passed a motion at its recent assembly stating it would support in initiating legal action for teachers acquitted or found not guilty of child abuse, presumably including prosecution of parents and children. Given our knowledge that there is an inherent difficulty in obtaining criminal convictions, particularly in sexual abuse cases, we are very worried that such a trend is likely to make victimized children even more reluctant to come forward.

In light of these developments, and also seeing the need for policies which support any kind of curriculum initiative, we would like to stress the need for policies which are proactive, pro children, so that what we see as being the current backlash against advances made on behalf of abused children is held in check, and perspective, which I think is very important in this highly volatile area, can be maintained.

We want to comment about structure, bringing into that discussion, of course, the topics before you: streaming, semestering and so on. Our principal concern here is that the structure of educational institutions be not only consistent with the principles of abuse prevention, but that they should be designed to maximize their capability of responding to the needs of the many students.

I think we have to be aware and recognize that for a large proportion of students going through our system, at some point in their school career they are going to be traumatized by something: by abuse perhaps, by an assault, by divorce in their family, by death and so on. We are very concerned that children do not end up suffering additionally by losing and being put behind academically. We are very concerned that the system be flexible enough.

In terms of that, we feel greater fluidity between the different academic streams would certainly better serve the students we are worried about than rigidity between the streams. Judging from the Radwanski report, a good portion of students in basic or general levels end up there for precisely the fact that they have been abused or have suffered some kind of trauma. Our question is, is it any wonder that so many of them subsequently drop out? We are saying it is critical that children rendered powerless and devalued in one situation, if they are being abused, are not revictimized by an educational system which fails to respond to them appropriately because it is simply not flexible enough to do so.

We have broadened grade promotion to talk about assessment procedures in general because we are very concerned about how this affects abused children. One of the major signs of progress in our struggle against child abuse and violence has been that children have been coming forward at younger and younger ages. There is no question that the schools have played an important role in early detection of child abuse. We feel the trend towards evaluating the whole child as opposed to just his intellectual abilities has decidedly positive implications for enhancing this role.

However, we would like to point out that we feel there are some real needs here, that people are not quick to label certain behaviours without looking behind what those behaviours might signify. We certainly know children who were designated as daydreamers or as antisocial who turned out to be children who were abused.

I would like to quote Dr. Pat Kincaid, who is here today: "No teacher should be in a classroom today without an understanding of the realities of family violence and sexual assault. It's the key to understanding the whole child."

That brings me to staff development. To talk about curriculum or any of the other areas we have talked about without talking about staff development would leave an enormous deficit. The core curriculum as we have outlined it in this brief is going to require very careful implementation and is going to require careful training of people who are going to implement it to ensure that they have special skills, knowledge and sensitivity. We are saying at this point, too, that in some cases it may well be appropriate to bring in professionals from the community rather than again putting the onus on the teachers to engage in this area. We see that there needs to be more intersystem communication and co-operation on that level. We would also like to emphasize that we feel that all educational staff have a role to play in the prevention and detection of child abuse, regardless of their connection to any particular core curriculum.

As I have already said, there is a tremendous need for education in this area. We need to ensure that teachers are not being abusive in their interaction with children or not failing to point out sexism in a history class or failing or encouraging, for instance, a kill attitude in physical education and so on. We need to find some way of making the school environment a culture that promotes nonviolence instead of a culture of violence.

I know I have talked recently to someone who has just gone through one of the faculties of education. She was quite disappointed in the fact of how little there was on positive child management. She said virtually nothing was taught on abuse. I think that really needs to be addressed if we are going to see a different level of quality of teachers interacting with children in terms of this area.

Also, we felt it was really important to talk about the importance that if teachers are to rise to the dual responsibility of detection and prevention, it is so important that there be services both within the school and within the community that

can provide solid backup and follow-up for students and teachers. Otherwise, what we are suggesting be asked of teachers would be unfair and unrealistic.

I was quite moved, and disturbed to some degree, a year or so ago when I was meeting with teachers in an elementary school where there had been really quite a brutal rape of a grade 7 girl by grade 7 and 8 boys in that school. One of the frustrations expressed by the teachers was that every single one of these boys had been identified in grade 1 as a child with problems and had been identified to whoever was appropriate to know about that, but nothing had been done about those children. I think there is something for us to learn from that.

I think one of the problems with student services is that they have tended to be marginalized. What is available varies widely from board to board. In one board you have psychologists who know nothing about abuse and who are not prepared to deal with abuse. In another school board you might have a whole group of social workers who are quite prepared to deal with abuse. That inconsistency really needs to be addressed.

Certainly we need to be promoting more interconnectedness between the school's role and the community and parents and so on so that each one's role is not out on a limb somewhere, but that each can enhance and support the other. Student services should be mainstreamed. They need to be more visible. A lot of students do not even know what is available. They need to be available to both teachers and students.

Our recommendations basically summarize a lot of the things that we have drawn out or emphasized in our brief. I will not read them at this point. Do you want me to? Would you like me to go through the recommendations?

Mr. Jackson: Read it into the record.

Ms. Stewart: For the record, okay.

Madam Chairman: The other thing is that we are being televised this afternoon, so for those people out in Ontario who are watching us, it would be very helpful if they heard your recommendations.

1630

Ms. Stewart: We propose:

1. That the Ministry of Education take the lead in developing a conceptual framework within which topics related to abuse, including child sexual, physical and emotion abuse and neglect, violence towards women, including wife abuse, sexual assault and coercion, elder abuse, male/

female socialization, personal safety, assertiveness, nonviolent effective communication and problem-solving skills, conflict resolution, relationships, healthy sexuality, parenting, child development, self-esteem and self-concept, death, including suicide, drug/alcohol abuse and sensitization to people, animals and the environment and their interdependence could be addressed, and that it is ensured that:

(a) Topics related to abuse and its prevention are addressed from kindergarten on and that, in particular, guidelines for a compulsory core curriculum are developed at the secondary school level.

(b) Values and concepts contributing to the prevention of violence and abuse permeate all aspects of the curriculum.

(c) Teaching methods reflect the principles of abuse prevention and that these methods are actively encouraged, for example, co-operative learning, while practices which contradict these principles, for example, poisonous pedagogy, are actively discouraged.

(d) Policies and structures in the educational system are considered in terms of their effect on abused children and the prevention of abuse and that voids in policy regarding abuse and response to it are addressed at all levels.

(e) Staff development related to the understanding, detection, reporting and prevention of abuse be made a priority at all levels of the education system.

2. That student services within school boards be evaluated in terms of their ability to respond to the problem of abuse and that an effort be made to ensure consistency and availability of such services to students across the province.

3. That effort be made to formalize a relationship between schools and social services in the community, for example, the development of protocols, so that victims of abuse are better served.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the building of a caring and responsive community is fundamental to the prevention of abuse in all its forms. Only through examining the school as a total environment, an intrinsic part of the larger community, can we hope to maximize its effectiveness and contribution to the reduction of violence in our society. The principles of nonviolence, respect for children and sexual equality must permeate all aspects of the curriculum, teaching methods, policy structure, student services and learning environment as a whole. They must be reflected in the attitudes of

teachers and school staff, what they say and do on a day-to-day basis.

We cannot hope to solve the widespread problem of violence and abuse overnight, but through recognizing its realities and the specific role that every individual and organization can play, and through parents, schools and the community as a whole working together, we can make a meaningful start.

We hope we have been helpful to the committee today in giving substance to the part that the education system can play and hope that our recommendations will not only be given serious consideration but will also see realization in the near future.

We would like to thank the committee for hearing us today and we look forward to your questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Catherine. When you appeared before our committee in July, we asked you if, when you came back in September, you could give us some specific recommendations as far as curriculum and structure were concerned. I can say you certainly have achieved that today, so we thank you for that.

I had a small story to tell that my daughter relayed to me last night. In her grade 5 physical education class yesterday afternoon, one of the boys was acting out and said some very derogatory things towards the girls and the girls were quite upset about it. The teacher, who just happens to be a male, sent the boy from the room and told him that until he learned to respect others, he was not welcome in the class.

It is a minor story, but I think it indicates the right attitude, that it is respect for the individual and for others that we have to get the children to realize as children, and then perhaps when they become adults they will also realize that. The children who have suffered abuse are a different story, but at least for those who have not, it is fostering the right attitude.

We will open up for questions.

Mr. Jackson: I would like to welcome you back. I am very delighted at the depth of the brief and the range in which you have covered the topic and assisted us, as a committee, in increasing our understanding of how deeply rooted the problems exist and how, clearly, the school board is just one of a variety of public institutions which can be helpful to remediate abusive situations in our province.

I guess my first question would have to do with the point you raised about the limited access for teachers-in-training at faculties of education to

programs that would help them understand human awareness, whether they are regarding child abuse or whether it is more generally in Gestalt and awareness programs. Have you received any feedback about the faculties and the limited access, or have there been discussions with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities with respect to improving access to those kinds of programs?

Ms. Stewart: I have talked directly to the faculty of education at the University of Toronto and was assured that these topics were in fact being covered by the dean, but that was not the experience of people I have talked to who have actually gone through the course. There seems to be some discrepancy between perhaps the perception from the administration of what is being taught and what in fact is being taught.

Ms. Marshall: May I just add to that? I think from the work that we have seen, we very much welcome the development of the interministerial committee that the province, with a lot of encouragement from groups such as ours, has put into place to deal with sexual assault. The province is beginning now to make sexual assault a priority.

What that interministerial committee is now doing is putting together its own list of ways in which each ministry is responding, and we have, as an organization, some shopping lists for each of those ministries. There are 13 now meeting, and for Colleges and Universities, one of them is an improved response in all curriculum areas, but particularly for the faculties of education. That can go in also for the interministerial committee.

Mr. Jackson: You are probably aware that when Ms. Stewart was before us last time, I made reference to the Stopping Rape II symposium recommendations that were made, enunciating each of the ministerial areas of concern that were flagged. That has been requested to be circulated to all members of the committee, so hopefully they have had an opportunity to look at the interrelationship.

I would like to move to the Ministry of Education and curriculum modification. In my view, that seems to be one of our more major areas. That can be achieved at far more rapid a rate than, say, modifying attitudes in teachers, especially now that the lawyers have immersed themselves in the conduct and attitude of teachers in this regard by the recent Ontario Teachers' Federation resolution. Where are we at with that in terms of any comments with the ministry?

Ms. Marshall: I think in that interministerial committee role, if I may start, the Ministry of

Education must be playing, with the help of us all, the key role, because in all the violence prevention work that we are doing, nothing makes as much sense and is going to be as effective as the long-term educational initiatives. We are working on making the Toronto transit system safer, improving street lights and working on the development of support services.

But to get at challenging the tolerance of violence in our society and to start really reducing the pervasiveness of sexual violence in the society, where we see it everywhere—we are seeing the excusing of it in the courts, the celebration of it in the media—if we are really going to deal with that, we have to turn to our educational system. This is where we see your role as a committee is so critical and welcome the timing of this committee and the composition of this committee. I think that also is very critical in the understanding that you bring to this issue with that interministerial committee.

Ms. Stewart: I do not want to minimize the importance of attitudes of teachers. I remember one workshop where I did a whole thing on sexual assault, and the opinions expressed by teachers were shocking to many of the teachers who were there. One teacher was particularly horrified by what he heard the other teachers saying. They were coming out with every myth in the book. Sexism was rampant in their comments.

One teacher came up to me afterwards and he said: "I do not think I ever understood till I saw this workshop. I had always thought that the problem was sensationalizing in the media, and I never understood until this workshop just what a powerful force the teachers are themselves."

Just to re-emphasize that point, we had teachers going back after a play, which was designed to refute these myths, who went and used the play to perpetuate the myths that they refused to disbelieve. They used the play as a vehicle to perpetuate their own misguided ideas that are just quite contrary to fact in terms of what sexual assault is all about. But they used the play to that end.

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I think the attitude of teachers is very critical. We can have a wonderful curriculum and we can even have wonderful curriculum materials, but if we do not have appropriate people to do that, or even if we have one appropriate person in a staff and everybody else is doing something quite contradictory, then we are not going to really get very far.

Mr. Jackson: I cannot help but underscore how complex an issue this really is. To get into it, just from the limited perspective of a school board, I know in my 10-year experience as a trustee—and we were, quite frankly, the second board in Ontario to react to the Emanuel Jaques situation and to bring in the theatrical reference you made in your brief—even in our board, the trustees, all of a sudden, had enough money to buy the basic component but did not have enough money to do the in-service. It was like giving a four-year-old the keys to a car and saying go ahead with it.

There are many cases of that going on in this province. I just wonder how far we have come in the last four or five years in terms of reversing that so that there are more clearly enunciated guidelines for boards to follow to deal with professional development which leads to more appropriate placement of staff personnel.

In some instances, the football coach is the most inappropriate teacher to be teaching family life to a mixed class of prepubescent teenagers, but you cannot get the program transferred from the teacher to a more sensitive teacher. There are those kinds of hurdles that have yet to be overcome.

I realize that Metrac carries a major burden in this province. Really, it has become one of the chief spokespersons and proponents for this issue and there is a smattering of networks around the rest of the province. Have you been able to receive, whether within the Metro area, which is your jurisdiction, or outside of Metro, some shining examples of work in school?

On all the issues in education we deal with, always brought to the table is an example of some really tremendous work being done. It is being measured, and we can deal with the measured outcomes and prove that the work being done is meeting with success. Yet we are not receiving that from within educational circles on your agenda, on the areas of concern you have raised. Is there any way of getting the issue—

Ms. Stewart: You have raised a couple of questions here. I just wanted to deal with your one on staff development in terms of what the progress is.

Mr. Jackson: That was a comment, but I would like to hear more.

Ms. Stewart: I just wanted to give you an example. Certainly when we do our programs, in the program I am involved with right now with the play, always we stress the importance of staff development and most schools go along with that, most boards go along with that. There is an

initiative with family violence now where the first thrust of it has been staff development, under the auspices of the ministry. So there certainly are initiatives in that direction.

Ms. Marshall: But.

Ms. Stewart: But.

Ms. Marshall: Although there are some from the ministry they are not very extensive at this point, they have been basically board of education initiatives or one department within a board of education. That is why we are getting this piecemeal and the hit-and-run and some very good work done by some wonderfully dedicated teachers who, against the adversity of not having the funds to do it, are really doing it almost in a voluntary fashion.

There is some local board support, but I think one of the most important messages we have today is that this kind of programming has to be done on a larger scale. It has to be done with a ministry kind of initiative working with the boards of education, and I think we have been one of the organizations that has helped to recognize the kinds of interrelatedness of the various topics that are being dealt with.

I think educators have appreciated the fact that we have recognized that. That is an important focus to continue to keep, that these topics are interrelated, that they are massive, that they are large. They must have the ministry kinds of initiatives happening. I think there is certainly receptivity within the ministry to doing that, but there must be some political pressure there, obviously.

Ms. Stewart: If you are looking for them, there certainly are shining examples of initiative in Ottawa, in Metropolitan Toronto, in Halton and so on, but each one of those programs is limited by the fact that there is not this ministerial backup. Even they are limited.

Mr. Jackson: My point was simply that we are lagging in pulling them all together.

Ms. Stewart: Absolutely.

Mr. Jackson: We have identified the problem and we have the examples of the abuse, but in education, which lumbers along in its reform, if we want to accelerate this agenda, we have to bring those examples forward and talk about them.

I will briefly ask this last question. It has to do with dropouts and the correlation between the problems of self-esteem and family dysfunction, which could be in a variety of forms, from sexual abuse to other forms of abuse, and between the increased number of dropouts and the inability of

the school system to catch them. I appreciate very much your reference to the semestering system, because in fact that is what we do with students who are on early school leave in order to bring a pregnancy to term or who are coping with interventions in response to a rape. They semester out. I am very pleased that you put on the record that it is a desired good that in fact students do not suffer the loss of a whole year, which was the experience of students of my generation. That was your only option, to lose a whole year. It is becoming more sensitive.

You also brought in the notion of support systems within the schools, and there is a wide variance between boards as to the psychiatric support services, the social work team and its mandate. It is the mandate which concerns me. Some are there purely to deal with retention, as opposed to assisting students through a difficult period and working with a more holistic view.

Can you elaborate or make any further suggestions with respect to the fact that there is such a wide variance in terms of those support teams and networks that deal with the dropout and/or the person who has to leave school for a period of time because he or she can no longer cope? We also have its worst form, which is the increased number of student suicides which are all part of that. You could deal with it preventively; but I would rather deal with it as dropouts and not on the issue of the higher teen suicide rates.

Ms. Stewart: One of the ideas that was suggested by Radwanski would be a good one, a mentoring system, for instance, where each student has a particular teacher who has an ongoing interest in what is going on with him.

I think we need to be imaginative in terms of how we build these kinds of supports into the system and make them more mainstream, but as a minimum I would like to see social workers, and enough of them, in every single school board in this province. Part of their mandate, as you are pointing out, would be to deal with children who are in some kind of difficulty, for whatever reason. They would get the support when they needed it, not when they are presenting a real behavioural problem as a teenager—they have just, you know, vandalized the school, so people start sitting up to notice these children at a young age. They are there to be noticed. Often, teachers just do not know what to do. There is no one to refer these children to.

You pull community services into that service. You have a youth clinic that is much more tied into the school, for instance. It is much more

visible in the school. The students know that exists, and they know how to access it. It is not a big mystery. I think we have done really well at mystifying a lot of our social services.

A child who is being abused has nowhere to phone. To expect a child to phone the children's aid society, it is daunting for an adult to phone the children's aid in Metro and get through. I think these things have to be addressed. We have to look at it right across the board. But starting in the school, I think we have to look at every way possible to make that support system more viable and more effective.

Ms. Marshall: And that would include the specialized education for those supporters, for the public health nurse and for the social workers; because again, often we have those curriculum voids right now in their training, as there are in the medical professional's training.

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Mr. Jackson: As a final comment, it is the point that I was always very impressed with what they were doing at the London Board of Education where they in fact had worked out a program in response to early school leavers, dropouts and young adults in conflict. They had put a social worker actually in the school as part of the health services network within the community. It worked tremendously. They were measuring outcomes in terms of improvements and yet it was hard to sell it anywhere else in the province. That gets back to my point about, "Let's take our great successes and start advertising them and get more boards turned on to it."

Mrs. O'Neill: On page 4 of your presentation you have a statement, "while it is clear that many students..."—and I think you added, "especially male students"—"in this province are getting nothing at all." You did, did you not?

Ms. Stewart: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: I was wondering why you added that. It obviously was a second thought. Do you feel there needs to be more emphasis?

Ms. Stewart: It was not a second thought. It was something that just was not emphasized in the course of writing the brief, but was something I did want to bring to your attention because often a school will say, "Well, we are doing programming in that area." What it turns out to be is that they are doing programs for girls.

There is a great tendency, particularly at the high school level, to define this problem in terms of who the victims are, therefore they are the people to be addressed. It has been very hard to get it across that we are not just dealing with

potential victims. In the high school level particularly, we are dealing with potential and actual perpetrators. I certainly have been in classrooms where I have had perpetrators identified to me afterwards.

It is a real concern that we have that this not be seen as something that goes into an area of the curriculum that tends to attract primarily female students.

Mrs. O'Neill: Could you outline some of those areas of the curriculum that you feel are doing somewhat of a job on this at the moment?

Ms. Stewart: For instance, some of these topics are dealt with in the girls' group in physical education but then the boys in physical education get nothing. We have encountered that quite a number of times.

Mrs. O'Neill: So this would be the health component of physical education?

Ms. Stewart: The health component of physical education.

Similarly, some subject areas such as family studies do seem to have a higher level of participation by girls than by boys. So again, if that is where it is dealt with then it is primarily girls who are getting it. We would like to emphasize the importance that—

Mrs. O'Neill: Certainly what you are saying seems to be an across-the-curriculum approach that you would see as ideal.

Ms. Stewart: With a core curriculum that everyone gets.

Madam Chairman: I would like to very sincerely thank Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children for coming before us again and for your presentation today.

Ms. Marshall: We do wish you well with your deliberations. We have certainly given you a very large order, but again we feel great confidence in this committee's ability to take on a larger order too.

Madam Chairman: Our next presenters will be the Alliance for Children. As I recall from last time, we had quite a large number of presenters, so you may want to start at this end and work yourself around the table. If you would like to come forward and have a seat please.

Welcome to our committee again. It is very nice to see you back before us. I found your presentation last time very balanced. It gave us a perspective from both sides. We are looking forward to hearing you again. Would you like to identify yourself for purposes of electronic

Hansard? Then you may begin whenever you are ready.

ALLIANCE FOR CHILDREN-ONTARIO

Mrs. Walker: I would like to identify myself as Margaret Walker. I have been the president of the Alliance for Children. The two with me at the table today are Margaret Pollard from the Ontario Association for Community Living and Eva Nichols from the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. As well in the room, although they seem a little shy to come right up to the table at this time—they may wish to do that later—is Jill Cowie from the Easter Seal Society; the Ontario Society for Autistic Citizens is represented by Jane MacLean; the Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario is represented by Bonnie Charbonneau; and Views for the Visually Impaired is represented by Vera Malec. There are other associations we have listed on the first page of our presentation. Unfortunately, they are not all able to be here today.

It is a pleasure to have an opportunity to come here again and to present to you on behalf of 12 parent associations which are concerned with special needs children and exceptional children in Ontario. The submissions we have had the opportunity to make this summer have been worthwhile endeavours; they have not always been easy, but a good experience for all of us.

Just as a comment, I think we would like to suggest that summertime is not necessarily the easiest time to attempt to get a number of parent associations together for consultation and then for approval from the boards of directors, but we understand your purposes in convening these at this time.

What I would like to do is highlight a few of the sections as we go through the report and then go through the recommendations as we did the last time and then entertain any questions you may have.

As we said the last time, it would be untrue for us to come here and say we agree on everything; of course we do not. This report does highlight those areas in which we agree and we have been able to establish some common ground and some of our organizations will be before you again in this round of your meetings. Their issues and concerns and differences of position will be presented at that time.

As you have read through this report and our previous reports, I am sure the two words "options" and "flexibility" stand out. It seemed so to me when I reread it, again and again: "option," "the need for options," "the need for

flexibility." How can we look after the individual children who are out there? As in our comments to you in our previous brief, we are very concerned that children and the needs of children must be the initial and main concern when we are taking a look at any decisions in education for our children.

As we noted in our response, we found that the four areas of streaming, grade promotion, semestering and OSIS were somewhat limiting to us. Therefore, there are several other areas we would like to deal with before we go into those areas.

For many of us, our children at the elementary level, those exceptional children who are identified and looked after, have some very good supports and that does not always seem to carry through into the secondary level. As our report suggested, it seems that sometimes people say: "Well, there are no more problems left when we get to secondary level. Somehow these problems are all going to disappear." This is not true in what we find as parents and for our children. It is very necessary that supports be continued for our children in the secondary level in order that they can do extremely well.

The Radwanski report we found extremely distressing to many of us because it did not talk about exceptional children at all, other than in a very negative way for some of those children. I think it is very important that when we are talking about children we do remember that we have exceptional children in our schools and that they have particular needs.

The Ontario Ministry of Education and those of us as parents talk about the need for the most enabling environment for our children and we talk about that in terms of opportunities for placement and services that are provided. We talked a little bit the last time about some of the physical settings to buildings and the need for those; this time, when we were discussing, a few other areas came up. At the secondary level, it appears that most boards are not providing accessibility for handicapped students in all schools. If there are not opportunities for all levels of programming as they exist now in those schools, some of our physically handicapped children are further held back in the areas and the options they will have. We feel this is extremely important to take a look at.

There is no way that all exceptional children or all physically handicapped children are at a general level or a basic level in their needs for educational opportunities. Many of them are at the advanced level and obviously need some

gifted programming as well and it is important that they have those options and opportunities available to them.

1700

In our schools at the secondary level we find very often the libraries may be on the second floor, very far away from some children who are not able to access them. They may be able to get around on the first floor, but not necessarily to the second. That is detrimental to them and restricts them.

When we were talking, guidance came up. Without question, all of our associations are very concerned about the guidance and guidance counselling and supports that are available in the schools.

Guidance is an extremely important area, it is a very diverse area, but we think it is extremely important that this be expanded and improved and that those persons who have responsibility in guidance are aware of the needs and the opportunities for exceptional children. They are not always aware.

In my own area in terms of gifted, very often the guidance teachers will say, "Well, you're so good in everything you could just go right ahead and do whatever you like." That is not necessarily true, and there certainly are some needs for all of our children to have good guidance counselling, and for us as parents as well, because when our children come home from school and say, "Well, I'm going to drop this subject or that subject," what really are the ramifications? Very often they are cutting out possibilities.

Teacher training, and we have heard about teacher training earlier this afternoon; I am sure you are hearing about it a great deal: Teacher training is extremely important and many of our teachers require preservice, in-service and professional development once they are teaching, in the needs of exceptional children.

Another area I think is extremely important and we have touched on in the report is the need—these teachers have to be willing, and not just willing, but sometimes they need some help and support in learning how to deal with parents and some of the other support services that are available in the schools. I think many of us came through a school system when the teachers did not have a lot of the answers and we know now that cannot be because of the broad variety of information and the information that is needed. They need to learn how to be able to access and use all of those support services.

To get on to the four areas that you asked us to respond to, grade promotion is the first one we

will deal with. At the present time, grades are very arbitrary. We talk about them in terms of the age. Grade 1 is approximately age 6 and so on and so on. Is this really reasonable?

I am sure you have had a chance to look at the early primary education project report—I particularly love the tumbling kids on the front—but in that report it talks about—this is on page 31 in EPEP, and I will just read from there.

“Children learn and develop best in an environment characterized by continuity and flexibility.”—that word again—“The experience of learning follows a natural flow that the school should attempt to preserve. It should not put up artificial barriers to learning, impeding one child’s readiness to move ahead quickly or depriving another of the need to take time to acquire certain concepts or to gain confidence in the school environment. Nor, in view of the unbounded curiosity of children, should learning experiences be required to fit into neatly defined subject categories. The curriculum, therefore, should provide an environment which allows the child to establish relationships and to understand his world as a whole.”

I think I speak for some of the other associations as well. When we saw, in taking a look, that some of these things could happen in primary, there is no reason why those sorts of ideas cannot continue throughout the whole education of our children.

For exceptional children, they need flexibility. Not all children come into grade 1 ready to read and some others are well advanced in reading. There is a need for some flexibility with these children. There need to be some goals and objectives set for the children and for their progress and promotion to be established on that basis.

At the high school level we talk a great deal about the high school diploma but very often we forget about the certificate of education. I think it is important that we remember that is there and available and that there are opportunities and options that principals can exercise in dealing, particularly with some of our exceptional children.

I think there also is a need in that vein for the community to know what these mean. What is a certificate of education? What does a high school diploma mean?

We also believe the end result of education is not necessarily a job. Of course, we want all of our children and each of us to have opportunities for employment, but what we would hope is the goal of school is that they should know how to

learn. Continued lifelong learning is a goal for each and every one of our children.

Where we talked about semestering, we had a great deal of interesting comment. We talked about what would happen if school went all year long; we know there are some jurisdictions in North America where that is beginning to happen. There certainly are some very positive things which could happen.

Some of our children find the summer period much too long in terms of a break between their learning experiences. For other children who may have been hospitalized or had some other concerns like that, who have not been at school for all of the year, it would be an excellent opportunity for them to be able to continue their education throughout the year.

However, with semestering as we see it now, there are some concerns and certainly some benefits. One of the areas of concern we have for exceptional children is that very often at the secondary level there is an opportunity for them to have courses which will help them develop study skills, research skills, some of those very necessary things they require in order to gain credits in other areas.

Unfortunately, for our students most times those courses do not gain credit for them. That is a big disadvantage. If it is a full year’s program, it means they are missing one credit; instead of being able to obtain eight, they will obtain seven. If it is a semestered school and the program continues through both semesters, they really have the option of obtaining only six credits and, therefore, that would suggest they must spend more time in school.

In terms of streaming, we again want to recognize that all our children are unique. They are not all the same. There is no one option which can be viable for all children. They cannot all fit into the same mould. For any placement of a child, it is important that parents are involved. We stressed this the last time. Parental input is really necessary. We are partners in the education of our children and, wherever the placement is, we must be part of the decision-making process. Of course, that leads us to the identification and placement review committee procedures, which we strongly endorse.

We believe OSIS is a very exciting and interesting document which can provide a great deal of flexibility, but at the present time it is not being used effectively throughout the province, nor uniformly. There are options and information in there—we have listed them—identifying exceptional children and the needs to modify courses

they can have. Their needs for guidance are identified within OSIS and students can take those courses. Work experience, co-op education; there are so many.

Earlier, Mr. Jackson was asking for models in terms of co-op education. There are boards around the province doing wonderful things with all of our exceptional children in co-op placements. The co-op placements which are happening are excellent for our children, but they are also extremely excellent for the community out there to learn of the abilities of all of our children.

OSIS does allow for flexibility in mandatory subjects, and for exceptional children that is extremely important. We believe before any consideration to discard OSIS is even contemplated, it should be fully implemented, uniformly across the province, and the flexibility which is there should be provided for all of the children. Once that is done, there should be good evaluation of the process and its benefits for our children.

If I can just go over the recommendations now, I will make a few comments. Recommendation 1 is similar to that of the last time we appeared before you. The children of Ontario must be the focus in all your discussions and decisions about education. When we talk about "children," we mean all children; none of the children can be disenfranchised.

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Recommendation 2: There is a continued need, in the view of our organizations, to provide a variety of program and placement options which are available to all students to ensure that the needs of individual students both at the elementary and the secondary level are accommodated.

We spoke last time about the co-operation that is developing and has been developing in triministerial and other ministerial organizations and deliberations and discussions. We feel that co-operation among ministries must be continued and expanded.

Guidance services must be enhanced. The role of guidance in supporting educational decisions of students and parents is vital. Guidance personnel require constant updating and upgrading.

Recommendation 5: Parents must be recognized as partners in the education of their children and must be consulted and informed about decisions which will affect the future education and career options of their children.

The Parent Guide to Special Education, which is available for all parents of children who may be

put before an identification placement and review committee, must include information about secondary school. As we look around the province, most of them only talk about options and information for elementary school pupils. We know as parents that very quickly our children go from elementary to secondary school and beyond.

Recommendation 7 deals with teacher training. Teacher training at the pre-service, in-service and professional development level must include information and training with respect to exceptional children and other children with special needs.

Recommendation 8 is that the sound philosophy of OSIS and the enabling options provided in OSIS must not be discarded without an opportunity for an evaluation of a fully implemented program.

I would like to point out, just before closing, that we found it a valuable experience for 12 organizations to get together to discuss this. I hope that as a committee you can understand the importance of those of us coming together who have children with very diverse needs. But we all come together in a common goal, which is education and the best possible public education for our children in Ontario.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to come again. If there are questions, we would be happy to respond to them. I will not do all the answering. I will call on my colleagues.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Alliance for Children for its usual excellent presentation today. We have heard quite a few of the same arguments with regard to teacher training, guidance, flexibility, options and the need to make sure that OSIS is fully implemented before anybody is attempting to either review or disband it. But you put it so succinctly that I think it clarified a number of the issues.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The very diversity which you represent makes it also difficult to ask questions which will relate to all of your children. When you talk about OSIS and understanding the range of ability and disability that exists among the children of your member groups, I am wondering if we can talk a little bit more about the certificate diploma, the whole notion of credits and what they mean or do not mean to groups of kids within the alliance, because I think a number of people do not really have an understanding of what is wanted for some of the children with larger disabilities, if I can put it that way.

I think you said that there was a pretty negative announcement by Radwanski, in his sort of allocating a whole group of people who might not be able to fully maximize their education. Yet there is a lack of understanding about just what the expectations are of parents for some of these children with larger disabilities. For instance, yesterday one of us—I cannot remember who—asked a question of the Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board, which has a fully integrated system, about how many of the Down's syndrome kids specifically had received credits. This was a measurement of success.

I wonder if you could talk a little bit about what some of your member groups think in those terms. OSIS is fairly defined now. Are there more credits than there used to be in terms of what you require to get a diploma? We had some people talking about dropouts today being affected by the fact that there are even more credits to get and whether that is going to add to the number of dropouts. From the perspective of your group, can you talk a bit about some of the varied representation and discussion you must have had about this in terms of the expectations which must be so different from one group to another?

Mrs. Pollard: I will attempt that one, as representing the Ontario Association for Community Living. People have a tendency to think a lot of the students in our community are some of the most difficult to teach. Of course, we do not believe that and we are hoping to change the thinking of a lot of people. The certificate of education is something which is not understood by a lot of parents and certainly should be in the handbook. That is something very strange.

With what we hope will be more flexibility, with having co-op education programs, those kinds of work experience programs and the continuing growth of the relationship between the business and industry community and the school community, I think it offers children who have been identified as developmentally handicapped the opportunity to work and gain more credits. The certificate of education allows for 14 credits, and there is flexibility for the principal to lower the six compulsory by taking away four compulsory and just allowing two compulsory. Probably there is more flexibility in the elective components for obtaining that credit, which would allow many more of the people we represent to gain the certificate.

But there are a couple of things. As I say, the parents do not know about it, the counsellors do

not offer this advice freely too many times and there is nothing written in the handbook about it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: To be frank as well, members do not know about it very much. If you want to expand even more on it, that would be very helpful to us. Perhaps we should be trying to get more information from the ministry for members.

Mrs. O'Neill: It is described in the OSIS document. You have that already.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: All right. I will just take it from there.

Mrs. Pollard: That is an example. I think the OSIS document is a well-written document and sort of helps people understand exactly all of the functions in the education system, but that is not the kind of thing you hand out to a parent. It is very hard to get information around all of these areas. Mrs. Walker referred to the differences sometimes. I must admit during this, the first week of school, the first calls were from parents whose children were entering the secondary school system. In the elementary system, they were able to have their supports, but in the secondary they have lost them.

I have just gone away from the certificate of education for a minute, but these are all things which interfere with the continuum of education for exceptional children. I am not the only one who represents young people who have these difficulties. Parents are faced with a lack of information and a confusion as to where to get accurate information. I certainly know that the certificate of education is almost a foreign term, for example. Maybe, Eva, you would like to talk about some other part?

Mrs. Nichols: Looking at it from the point of view of youngsters who have learning disabilities, it is obvious to all of us—or at least we try to say it is obvious to all of us—that children who have learning disabilities can learn. In the majority of cases, the certificate of education is not a particular goal. However, it is a fact of life that parents do not know about it. There are children with learning disabilities whose disabilities are very severe, for example, or so complex that even some of the basic-level courses are quite hard for them. If they were aware of the existence of such an option, that would be helpful because many youngsters with learning disabilities will drop out because they have trouble measuring up.

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In terms of answering your question about the whole issue of credits and so on, I suppose the

one thing that we, the 12 associations, certainly all agreed upon when we came together was that we genuinely believe education is for everybody. You may say that is a motherhood statement. We were mostly mothers. But in fact, it is more than that because one of the things that united us was a very strong and negative reaction to some of what was in the Radwanski report and in the Fullan-Connelly report on teacher education, suggesting there are certain children who really would be very much better off out of the educational system. That was our base and we certainly agreed on it.

We also agreed that breaking education down into manageable units for children, whether they are gifted, developmentally handicapped, physically handicapped or learning disabled, was a reasonable thing to do provided the units contained information that was appropriate for the individual child—by that, I am talking about curriculum content, process, pace, delivery and so on—and that they were not carved in stone to the extent that it is 110 hours no matter what, that this means so many sessions no matter what, that you only do it one way and evaluate it one way and that if you cannot write the exam, well, then, forget it.

I do not think we had any problems with the idea of credits. I do not think any of us are particularly worried about the fact that we are now talking about 30 credits as opposed to 27 before, and then the six, provided the flexibility of substituting for compulsory credits is available without having to get it out of a school principal like pulling teeth.

For example, the fact is that for a large number of children with learning disabilities, especially language learning disabilities, the French credit represents an insurmountable barrier. It really is absolutely beyond them to do that. We are amazed how frequently parents are not told, "As a principal, I have the right to substitute." Very often this only arises by the time the parents are upset, the child is upset, they have gone to the board, somebody else has become involved and lawyers are coming into it. Then suddenly somebody says, "Didn't I read somewhere that there is an exemption from the French credit?" That is really a communication lag.

I suppose the bottom line that I think we all agreed on was improved communication between the school, the parent, and of course when you are talking about high school the youngster as well. I think we sometimes forget about the fact that young people who are in high school, whatever special needs they present or do not

present, have a right to be involved in their own education.

We feel we can live with the credit system quite comfortably, provided people are prepared to look at the options and are prepared to make sure that those youngsters who take basic level can move to a general level when it becomes appropriate or vice versa, or to the advanced level, and that nobody blocks the time out in such a way that you are suddenly labelled a failure because you actually needed 150 hours to get the grade 11 trigonometry credit, whereas the person who sat next to you really only needed 80 hours but had to spend 110 anyway because there was no other way.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There is one other thing I would like your comment on that is all tied in with this, which is the notion of promotion which is one of the other major areas of our concern.

I know the things we have said in the past, that maintaining the peer group connection is very important in terms of age and that kind of thing. Can you fill us in a little bit more, though, about any subtleties or differences you make between, say, the elementary panel, the secondary panel and—we are hearing some talk about moving back to some older notions of retaining people rather than promoting them. We have, for instance, the Radwanski report that talks about mandatory summer school and things like that. I wonder if you might talk a little bit about promotion concerning your kids.

Mrs. Walker: I think it is extremely important that the information within a curriculum is covered by the children before promotion. I do not think any of us are suggesting that the children should receive credit for something they have not done. Therefore, under OSIS, particularly at the secondary level, and if we look at the early primary education project and some of those other suggestions at the elementary level, it becomes more a setting of goals and information to be obtained prior to moving on.

I think there are schools within the province where children who do not have all of the information in one particular area, but have finished the rest of the information for that grade level, are promoted and have the opportunity to catch up and do that. There are others where until the children have all the information for that whole grade covered, they are held back and there are not the opportunities for that flexibility for them to cover the material. I think that is extremely important.

In terms of the length of time for obtaining credits at the secondary level, that is an

extremely important thing. I think there are ways we can do that. It will also require a great deal of education of the general public and those of us as parents in the community to understand that there are different ways of grade promotion and how things are done.

Mrs. Pollard: Many of the pupils in our community have not exactly had too many opportunities to worry about credits; I will say that. We are certainly looking forward to your legislation. Hopefully, very soon, it will put us back into the general stream.

Also, when we are in that general stream, we want to be able to see something like many of the schools doing summer programs and things like that. We have to look at semestering. We urge you very strongly to look at semestering, because many of our pupils have to go into hospital or medical care for a certain length of time that restricts their learning at one time, but does not always necessarily prohibit them from carrying on some learning during that time.

Nevertheless, I am saying that if they did have another long period of the summer tied on to having just been in the Hospital for Sick Children for six, seven or eight weeks, that makes it very difficult to obtain the necessary schooling.

We all support what Margaret Walker has just said, and I will just reiterate it so there is no confusion. We do want to see that everybody has all of the content of a program covered. We do not want to promote any children or youngsters who have not covered all of the subject material, but I say that how they learn has to be taken into consideration. So Margaret's favourite word, "flexibility," belongs to all of us. We are always asking for flexibility in the school system to cater to the needs of the individual child.

Mrs. Nichols: If you would allow me, I would like to make not an association comment, but a personal comment on something you may consider as a select committee in looking at this whole issue of streaming, service and promotion and all the rest of it.

There is some really interesting research that has been done on the impact on children's self-esteem of the kind of placement and peer group interaction they are able to have when they are special needs students, whether it is the fully integrated setting you refer to with Waterloo county separate versus the fully congregated setting where children with special needs are brought together with other children with special needs, compared with the withdrawal system that seems to be probably the most common method

of special education service delivery in this province.

I am very disappointed—I guess that is the right word—that people are not really looking at the results of that research, because if in fact we were, we would not be doing some of what we are doing in program delivery.

There is no question that for the self-esteem of children, having a peer group is tremendously important. But the research does not bear out that the only consideration should be a chronological one, but intellectual and common interest and so on. Peer groups are also vitally important.

I can remember going to a presentation at the 61st orthopsychiatric conference that happened to be in Toronto, listening to psychiatrists talk about the fact that if any of us had a look at the people who are our peers, probably we would never be able to say how old they are or in some instances what kind of background they came from, that it was common interests, common concerns and so on that brought us together.

Somehow we seem to assume that for children there is only one consideration. It is not that chronological growth is not a consideration, but it should not be the only one. In fact, youngsters very often are quite comfortable being with children who are either older or younger than them, depending on their functioning.

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For example, going back to learning disabilities in particular, many children who have learning disabilities quite definitely mature more slowly and at a different pace than other children. Very often, having an extra year at home before they are enrolled in school can be really beneficial if other things work out. I think we run into problems when there are arbitrary decisions, that it is either you fail or you are promoted, and there is not the flexible approach of, does it really only have to be three years you take grades 1, 2 and 3, and could it not be three and a half or perhaps four, or maybe only two and a half?

Madam Chairman: We have two members left on the list to ask questions, Yvonne O'Neill and Charles Beer. In view of the fact time is fleeting, I would just ask if you would keep your comments and/or questions to the briefer side, as I know you always do.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am very happy to get the report. I know a couple of you are involved in the Ministry of Education's advisory council. It is very helpful. I was going to ask you to broaden recommendation 6 about the parent guide and you have already brought two things forward in the discussion up to this point, the exemptions

and the certificate of education. If you have not as yet put in writing to the ministry what you actually want regarding direction for secondary, I really wish you would do that because I think you are the people to do it. Be as very explicit and graphic as possible, because I think what you have just brought to our attention is being overlooked in many jurisdictions of this province.

I want to ask you as a group if you are doing something in the way of promoting a strategy that I think is very underutilized, and that is the peer tutoring or peer matching, whatever you want to call it. I just wonder whether, as a group, you are working on that at all. I had a feeling you might have some advice.

Mrs. Pollard: We have recently asked a group of people to get together because peer tutoring is something that I think we have been trying to struggle to promote for some years. It is the Waterloo board that is going to work with us in helping to develop a promotional package that we can hopefully take to the schools to look into this. As a group, yes, we have often discussed the support needed for students with exceptionalities. Whether it is coming through a peer-tutoring credit program within the school or whether it is in the form of a buddy system, there are many ways of providing support to youngsters with exceptionalities.

Again, it is something we have not sat down and written too much about. I think it is something also for members of the minister's Advisory Council on Special Education and also something else many of us sit on called the Parent Advisory Association Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees. We all sit on different committees and have lots of opportunities.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am sure personal friendships must develop.

Mrs. Pollard: Yes, we have our own peer system there.

Mrs. O'Neill: Sometimes we get personal on this committee and I just want to say that since I last saw you, within my own family I had a very happy experience that I think can be encouraging to all of us. I have a daughter who is pretty fresh out of a faculty of education, having completed it for just one year. In the last few months of the previous school year, she had the challenge of being presented with a young boy or a young man who had cerebral palsy and was blind. Before the end of June, she did have him participating in the kitchen and actually doing some building construction. I felt very happy that somehow or other

she had the supports to go along with her very positive attitude and did not seem to think this was extremely difficult.

The boy's parents were very happy with her efforts and came in and did videos of how the other students were supporting their own child. I felt very happy about all of that, that the faculty of education had prepared her, the students had helped in the adaptation and the parents were recognizing something very good here.

Mrs. Pollard: I would just like to make one brief addition to that. At the community college level, peer tutoring is an accepted thing now in the registrar's office. I think if we can have the whole continuum of services for the children, looking at something along this line will only benefit them all.

Mr. Beer: This is undoubtedly something that may well have come up when you were here before—I do not believe I had the privilege of sitting in at that time—and does relate to the comments I believe Mrs. Nichols was making about some of the research in terms of peer grouping and what not.

It probably happens to most of us that in September we get the most phone calls from parents with concerns about the educational system, and I am sure you find the same thing. I have had the experience, as I am sure other members have, where within a week you meet with some parents making a very impassioned case that their children must not ever be segregated in the school system. Then a day or two later, there is another set of parents who are terribly concerned that there are not going to be certain special options.

Something struck me as I thought about this September versus a year ago, because I am new here, knowing that increasingly there will be in our schools more and more children with varying kinds of learning disabilities and recognizing that many of us have absolutely no expertise whatsoever to make any kind of judgement as between those options. Has your group, which has come together as the Alliance for Children, put out any kind of position on this other than just saying, "There may be different ways of dealing with different situations and do not block off all the options"?

What do we do when parents come, sometimes through community living, sometimes through Down's syndrome and the different areas? I feel very inadequate, other than trying to sympathize and empathize, in making any kind of meaningful comment in some sense of saying, "This really is the best way to go." Yesterday, as has

been mentioned, we had a very strong presentation by the director of the Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board. I think if I were a parent, I would have heard him and said: "Terrific. To the barricades. Let's go." But I realize that does not meet everybody's need.

I am just wondering, are you also as groups searching for an answer to this one or do you feel you have the answer? If you have, please share it.

Mrs. Nichols: No, we certainly do not have all the answers. I think we are beginning to have some of the questions, though. If one listens to Mr. Flynn, of course, he carries that torch very well and all the rest of it.

Mr. Beer: He tried to hide it from us.

Mrs. Nichols: I think we do have a common opinion in terms of service delivery, and even on that common opinion we vary somewhat. Notwithstanding the approaches of Mr. Flynn and a few others, we believe there needs to be a full continuum of service available within each school board, which means in practice that for some children and some parents there needs to be the self-contained, segregated if you like—although we tend to talk about congregated among ourselves—service delivery. That is not just semantics; it really is a difference of opinion and approach.

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There needs to be the withdrawal-type program, where the child may spend a little bit of time in the regular classroom or quite a bit of time in the regular classroom. For some youngsters, being placed in the regular classroom with some support is appropriate.

On that particular continuum as to where we come down, we vary among ourselves, but none of us—and I think I can speak for everybody—would say that any extreme, all full-time, self-contained classes or all integrated without any other option, is the right thing for exceptional children.

If I may make a suggestion to you as to what you should do, you may want to familiarize yourself with the various parent advocacy groups in your community. Most of our associations have chapters throughout the province, perhaps not in every community but in many communities, and many MPPs do refer parents to us to discuss just exactly what it is that we can do as an advocacy group and a parent-support organization for those families. I do not think anybody would expect you, as an MPP, to be knowledgeable about all the nuances, even if you have been a trustee and certainly if you have not. It is not

something that everybody would expect, but as parent associations we would be delighted to have you refer families to us.

We are certainly not going to tell them that there is any one way. We will not even tell them what we believe to be the right way, but we will work with them as parents to try to identify what is right for their child today. That may not be what will be right next year. Next September it may be something quite different and the September after it may be different again.

I guess I am offering us collectively to you as a resource for those families struggling because they do not know which way to go. That is part of what we are about.

Mrs. Pollard: Besides the provincial organizations, it is important for the special education advisory committees of all the school boards also to hear what the parents are asking for or saying. I do not think a lot of parents are even aware of that vehicle and that has to be advertised so that the parents know there is somebody locally to whom they could say, "If Bill 82 is supposed to involve the parents in their child's program development, then how do we get involved?" One of the ways locally is through SEAC, and of course what Eva is suggesting, other consultation with the provincial organizations. Certainly, there is ours.

Madam Chairman: I note that one other member of the alliance is ready to make a comment. May I ask you to sit directly in front of a microphone and identify yourself for purposes of electronic Hansard.

Mrs. Charbonneau: Bonnie Charbonneau from the Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario.

I have just one comment about information and support. I would say over the past year we have been absolutely delighted and actually flooded by the number of school boards, teachers and people within the education system who have been in touch with us, requesting information, audio-visual equipment and support in talking to parents whom they have come across who have problems and are seeking some solutions. I would just let you know that I think it is spreading and we are all available.

Certainly, most of our mandate is to provide that kind of support, information and literature, etc. I think you will find we have a wealth of information there.

Mrs. Walker: If I could just add one last thing, none of our associations is going to suggest that there is only one way to do it. I think the other thing, as we then begin to work with the parents as well, is to go through the identifica-

tion, placement and review committee process and give them some support, help and guidance in dealing with that. Then a decision can be made which has educational input and parental input. The child, hopefully, and we believe, should be at the centre of that decision and it will be the best decision for that child at that time.

Mr. Reycraft: I would like to get some additional information from Eva if I could about the research to which she referred. Is it recent?

Mrs. Nichols: Yes, it is quite recent. I cannot tell you off the top of my head exactly where it is and what it is, but I can gather the information and send it to the select committee if you would like to have it.

Mr. Reycraft: I think that might be very helpful. It seems to me that has a direct application to the grade placement aspect of what we are supposed to be studying.

Mrs. Nichols: I will be delighted to do that.

Madam Chairman: We would very much appreciate it you could supply us with it yourself

if you have it or, if not, give the reference to our research person.

Mrs. Nichols: I believe I have it. If I do not, then I will phone and give the information to the research officer.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. I would again like to thank the alliance for coming. I know it must have been very difficult for you to try to commandeer volunteer resources during the summer and I do appreciate that you have taken the time and effort to do so. I must say I have found your presentations to be two of the best we have received before this committee because you are not only succinct, but I think you are trying to look at a fairly fair and unbiased viewpoint. I am certain a number of your recommendations are going to be highlighted by our committee. Thank you for coming before us today.

Mrs. Walker: Thank you very much.

The committee adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

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of Ontario



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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Organization of the Education Process

First Session, 34th Parliament

Wednesday, September 14, 1988



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, September 14, 1988

The committee met at 10:05 a.m. in room 151.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. Welcome to the select committee on education as we pursue our review of streaming, semestering, grade promotion and OSIS, basically very major components in the educational organizational process in Ontario. This morning we have on our agenda as our first presenter Morris Wernick.

Mr. Wernick, would you please come forward? Welcome to our committee. We have allocated half an hour for your presentation, so perhaps if you could take 15 minutes for your oral presentation and allow some time for members to ask questions, we would be very appreciative. You may begin whenever you are ready. You might identify yourself for purpose of electronic Hansard.

MORRIS WERNICK

Mr. Wernick: Thank you very much. My name is Morris Wernick. I suppose it is true to say I represent nobody and no one except myself and that my presence here is the direct result of your own advertising in the press for briefs to this committee. I had intended to interject a light note by describing my brief, which I believe you have a copy of, as the wit and wisdom of Morris Wernick, but then on mature second thought I thought that a document which is only about two pages long would not perhaps convey the impression I wanted to convey.

I will deal with the brief. I believe everybody has a copy of it. What I have done with it is attached with the first sheet my teaching experience. My background is 30 years in the public high schools and universities of Ontario. At the present moment, I pursue a ragged career as a freelance writer and a speaker to groups, mainly teacher groups, on educational subjects. I have attached a number of the articles I have written, partly to validate this claim of mine and partly because some of the ideas I am going to put forward this morning are contained in some of these articles and I will refer you to them briefly.

I gave no general rationale for my presence here before the recommendations because I wish

to do that for myself. How I came to be in this particular chair was that when I saw your advertisement, I did what perhaps many people do, which was to dismiss it as not pertaining to anything I do or think about; but afterwards, in view of the fact that I have spent quite a bit of my time writing and speaking about the education system of Ontario and that a fair amount of that writing has been critical, it occurred to me that it would not be a bad idea to take the position: "Well, if I am so experienced in the education system of Ontario, what it is that I could recommend to you that would be of some use? What could I practically say, from the point of view of a classroom teacher? Do this and this will help the system of education in Ontario." That is the point of view I took.

My recommendations, and I will go through them fairly quickly, have been made with that philosophy in mind, plus the fact that I have very much had in mind what should be the usual constraints on any recommendation.

First, it has to be practical, which means it has to be nondisruptive to the system in a way that makes it pointless. As has happened in my experience in the past, to put in changes which in themselves become so disruptive do more harm than good, to put it bluntly.

The second one is the obvious, the economic one, which means, how much would these recommendations cost?

As a quick aside here, a question I might ask the committee is, has anyone, for example, done even the broadest or roughest costing of what the main recommendations of the Radwanski report would cost? That is merely a rhetorical question.

I should come now to the recommendations. Presumably, because there are people watching us who do not have a copy of the recommendations, I will briefly state what they are and sort of add something to them.

1010

My first recommendation deals with the revision of the high school diploma. I am suggesting that after the completion of a foundation number of credits, the equivalent of three years of high school, students should be granted a high school diploma on the basis of whatever they obtain, whether 19, 20 or whatever number of credits.

I have given a rationale for this. The main points of the rationale are these: In the first place, it would involve no great change. There would be no great disruption. The majority of the students taking a high school diploma would do exactly as they are doing now. They would find out what the University of Toronto wants, what Sheridan College wants, what a hairdressing school wants or what anybody wants and they would get it. There would be no change.

The gist of this recommendation, really the focus in my mind, is on those people whom Radwanski, the government of Ontario, the education systems and the trustees tend to be very concerned about, namely, the students who are not academically bound, the nonuniversity students.

It has always struck me as strange that in the high school system we have a kind of pyramid, a triangle—a funnel is a better description—of what we do with these students. In other words, we have good programs for them. We spend a great deal of money and put a great deal of attention on the education of what we call general-level and basic-level students, nonacademic students, students who are never going to go to university or any post-graduate place.

We deal with them quite well compared with the way we used to deal with them. There is no question about that. But as they get closer and closer to the end of the funnel, or the end of the tunnel, then we say, "There are certain things you have to do before you can escape from here." That is what the high school diploma is, in a sense. If I can change the metaphor, it is a fence they have to jump. I see no need for it. I seen no reason, after a certain basic, minimum level of education, we cannot say to young men and women: "You know what you want to do by this time, or have a pretty fair idea. Do it. We will give you the diploma."

As I said, and there is a certain irony in that statement. That would mean people would go out of school with a diploma that people—employers, universities, other places—would actually need to read. I doubt very much whether many people read that piece of paper now or, if they read it, whether they understand it. I would have some difficulty, given all the computer jargon, description of courses, etc. They would need to read it and see whether that person, ex-student, has what they want.

I see nothing particularly revolutionary about that. As I have said, it is not an invitation for students to do anything they like. It is not an invitation to sort of throw the whole thing over. It

is an attempt to give those students flexibility in their lives and not have the Ministry of Education say to them, "You must have this, this or this," which they see absolutely no point in obtaining—none whatsoever. No doubt, you may have some questions on that. I will leave that for the time being.

My second recommendation deals with the legal status of school property. I do not want to dwell for very long on this. I was talking to a principal yesterday and running this past him—I have sort of checked these out—and his feeling is that since the change in the Trespass to Property Act, their problem is not so much with the legal question as with the attitudinal question.

My recommendation is that the appropriate acts be amended to give special status to school buildings and property. This would specifically relate to the areas of trespass and the rights of school administrative, instructional and custodial staff. What I mean by that is that in a day when the Ministry of Education feels it might be a good idea for students in grades 4 and 5 to have drug education, because the problem has reached that dimension, it might be a good idea to take a look at the laws of trespass, various laws of suspension and any other laws which principals and administrators might find useful to revise and say: "We had better take a look at the school laws and see how we can protect school property and protect students." It is not the property I am particularly interested in.

It is always interesting to me that when, as I have done for 15 years, I have brought students to this building, over the last few years we have the spectacle of long lines of grade 10 students going through the detectors in order to ensure the security of the members of the Legislature.

That might be a good idea, but I think it is rather ridiculous. It is strange, therefore, that this kind of protection is afforded in the Legislature when I suggest to you that the parking lots and the playgrounds of elementary schools are rather more under threat than the Legislature is every day. I am sure I do not need to spell it out for you. I will leave that one, if I may. If you have any questions, perhaps you would like to come back to that one.

At the moment, I would like to go to the one that is closest to my heart, the one on part-time jobs. As you will see from exhibit C, I suppose it is; I wrote an article for the *Globe and Mail* in April 1987 on this subject. I had quite a lot of feedback on that. The only thing I would say now, in 1988, as the difference from my view in that article, is that the situation has got worse,

and anybody—teacher, trustee or MPP—who does not think it has got worse has no idea as to what is going on in the schools of Ontario today.

In the case of any teacher who does not feel that the situation of part-time jobs is not affecting his work, I would question strongly what it is he is trying to do in the classroom. I feel as strongly as that about it. I have no hope whatsoever that any recommendation of mine or yours will have the slightest effect on this situation.

Mr. Radwanski dealt with it in his report. It was the only part of the report that made me smile, and there is not too much in the Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts that is intended to be humorous. It made me smile in the sort of ironic sense of its total ineffectuality. He recommended, as I pointed out, that employers should be instructed about the harmful effects of too much part-time work. The second recommendation was that warnings about part-time work should be inserted in school codes of disciplines. This is the bit that made me smile. This is not a situation that you or I are going to do anything about.

The hot economy, the boom or boomlet of Ontario, is fuelled by teenage labour. Employers want it and, believe me, the students want it. If they were listening to what I was saying today and could respond, they would howl me down. They do not want to hear this.

What I am saying to you, as I have said in the rationale, is that this part-time work provides the greatest single obstacle to the educational system of Ontario. If you think I am being hysterical about it, I think it is not a bad idea to talk, as I talk, to my colleagues, principals, vice-principals and department heads and see what kind of impact this is having on the educational system, the extra-curricular activities of our schools. It is horrendous and I feel very strongly about it. I go around when I am invited to do so. During the next couple of weeks, I am going to Simcoe. I talk to groups of teachers and I talk to them on this subject. I really believe that is a problem which is out of hand.

If, and again it is an aside, Sunday shopping comes to be a reality in Ontario, my suggestion would be that we close the schools down and turn them into malls, because there will be as many students in one place as in the other. I do not want to go over the top on this, but I really feel strongly about it, and I know that thousands of my colleagues, teachers, vice-principals and principals—I had a tremendous amount of feedback on this—feel the same way. I will leave that

for a moment because I am sure there may be questions on that and my time is running on quickly.

I have two recommendations about superannuation, one we can deal with quickly. Simply, I recommend that the present temporary window that allows teachers to retire early should be retained for at least another five-year period. I am here as a result of that window. If it were not for that window, I would presently be teaching a grade 13 American course. You might feel I would be better occupied, but I do not. It has been an excellent idea, for reasons which are a bit too numerous for me to deal with now. I urge you to keep it open.

1020

Number five is also a superannuation recommendation. It is my unique contribution. No one I know has ever suggested this, apart from myself, and I feel strongly about this one too. I recommend that there should be inserted into the superannuation act a minister's prerogative clause. The purpose would be to allow the early retirement of special categories of teachers who would not meet the qualifying terms of the window. The limits for this would need to meet actuarial standards of approval; otherwise, permission would be entirely in the discretion of the minister.

The rationale for this will be more obvious to some of you who I know have spent time in staff rooms and even to some of you who think back to your own school days. There is in virtually every staff room one or two people who should be out of there, for their good but mainly for the good of the students. I am not talking about discipline cases. There are other avenues for that. I am talking about people who maybe have taught for 20 years or more and for physical or mental reasons burn out in the accepted sense.

There may be other reasons, health reasons, for people who are not sick enough to go on any sort of disability, but who are certainly not healthy enough to work. There are people like that in virtually every school. There are not vast numbers. Those people might wish to go, taking the penalty that would be required. There is no way for them to go. They are trapped. Principals shrug their shoulders. What are you going to do with these people? Their work is not to the point where they could be pushed out or kicked out. They do their job as best they can. What I am suggesting is, for heaven's sake, would it not be a good idea to build in some special form of flexibility to allow people like that to go if they wish to?

My final point—the installation of a quality control system—I have dealt with in one of my articles. I know, because I have been watching your proceedings, members of the committee have some concerns with the business of uniformity from school to school, with standards and some idea of how one knows what is being done in one school is being done in another school. I appreciate those concerns. In turn, you have heard from the desk I am sitting at again and again and again the objection of teacher groups particularly to any form—not to any form—to many of the suggestions of standardization. I agree with those, as you will hear in a moment.

So what is to be done, as it were, between this desire for some effort to find standards and uniformity and this rejection, and I think the rightful rejection, of some iron collar of uniformity and curriculum on schools? I am suggesting that one of the things that would help would be my recommendation of teams of teachers, experts in the sense of whatever they are, consultants, visiting schools, by invitation or without, and making sure that the work of the departments in those schools is what it should be. That is the only one of my recommendations that would cost some money, but I believe it would be money well spent.

I would like to leave you with two philosophical points because I remember when the minister was here I watched, and he was being asked about a philosophy of education. My suggestion, and I do not make it impertinently, is what we do not want is a minister of education who has a philosophy of education. His philosophy, I think, should be a simple one. His job is to make sure that the education system of Ontario functions the best way it can. In order to do that, he will take advice and seek whatever he can.

What we do not want in this province, or for that matter in any other province, is an attack of Vander Zalmitis. That is not in the dictionary. I would not look it up. I just coined it. We are not going to see a situation—I am not going to offend anybody—where one party is going to hold power for over 30 years. If we have a situation where we have a change in philosophy every four or five years or so, the education system of Ontario will be in chaos. You people could come up with an educational philosophy for Ontario in 20 minutes if you wanted to. They are fairly straightforward and general. What I would ask you to do in any of your recommendations is to avoid virtually all attempts at centralization from the ministry down to the schools. This is the message I think you have heard from a number of groups coming

from this side of the table. I know it is fashionable now; it is the ethos to look for centralization.

I believe the English minister of education or of universities and colleges was going around Canada talking about the reforms being brought into Britain at the time, the centralized exams and so on. It is a great measure of English ethnocentricity that they would imagine that anybody in Canada could learn anything from a system in England which is, to put it mildly, in disarray. If these reforms are going to be put into practice, they will go beyond disarray.

I feel quite strongly about that, too. There are hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people in England who would give their right arms to have access to the kind of educational situation we have in Ontario. There is no doubt in my mind about that.

One final point on that—I meant to address it to Mr. Johnston, but he is not here—is that if one comes in contact with somebody advocating this sort of English system, it is a good question to ask whether those reforms will affect the little chaps in Eton and Harrow and the private-school sector. The answer to that is they will not. The difference here is that we educate our children generally, on the whole, communally; you send your children to the schools of Ontario. That is not the situation there, and I think we have very little to learn.

It is this centralization which in my view is one of the great weaknesses of the Radwanski report. I do not have time to deal with that, but I have written an article about it. If you would like to read it, it is there.

Lastly, because time is marching on, I would ask you as a committee to remember that there is only one public system of education in Ontario. I was discussing this with a reporter who did an article on my appearance here. He said, "No, there are two publicly funded systems now," etc. There may be two publicly funded systems, but there is only one public system of education in Ontario. As I said to the reporter, "If you decided to switch into teaching now—you might make a very good one—which of the systems could you go into?" Of course, there was only one.

So you are hearing and are going to hear all kinds of representations from special interest groups, private schools, etc., and I am sure many of the things they urge are desirable, but as you know, there are limited resources, limited opportunities and limited time. Your responsibility, as I am sure you know, is to the public system.

That is really all I wanted to say to you, but I would be more than happy to answer any questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for your very thoughtful comments. Several members have indicated they have questions.

Mr. Reyecraft: Thank you for taking the time and effort to come before the committee. You have made a number of statements which are, to understate it, very provocative.

Mr. Wernick: Yes, by intention.

Mr. Reyecraft: I want to pick up on a couple of those. The first point you made was the change that should be made behind why and under what conditions diplomas are given to students. I must admit I do not understand completely what it is you are recommending. A diploma is a symbol of achievement or accomplishment; it is a symbol that somebody has done something. Under your proposal, what would the diploma be awarded for?

Mr. Wernick: I see your point.

Mr. Keyes: Time spent in school, not accomplishment.

Mr. Wernick: I think the fact that it is a diploma for achievement is largely mythical, frankly. In other words, you get a grade 12 diploma and I get a grade 12 diploma. You may have been a tremendous student, with tremendous marks, etc., an excellent school citizen. I wrangled my way through. To many employers, a diploma is a diploma is a diploma and I would like to end that situation. I would like a diploma to mean something.

1030

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation has roughly the same idea, I believe, of foundation years. You say to a student coming into grade 9, "This is what you will do"—mandatory English, whatever—"and this is what you must take." After that, by the time they have reached the school leaving age, at 16 or whatever, if they want to do physics at the University of Toronto, there is no choice; they know what the University of Toronto wants.

Do you see what I mean? There is no problem with that. They will do what the University of Toronto or any other place asks them to do. But if a student wants to be a motor mechanic or something else—Mrs. O'Neill was talking about the shortage of cooking teachers yesterday, I believe—

Mrs. O'Neill: I would rather say "foods."

Mr. Wernick: Yes, foods. I have obviously made a boner there.

I was watching this and it struck me immediately that one of the problems we have with these areas, the nonacademic areas, is that many students are not able to pursue their particular interests and strengths, because to get through school with credits and go to institutions and places that would welcome them they need a senior social science credit or whatever it is that is required. That is what I am trying to say. I do not know whether that is any clearer.

Mr. Reyecraft: It seems to me it would make the diploma virtually meaningless. If it is simply going to indicate that somebody has spent three years in a secondary school, then it really has no meaning for an employer.

Mr. Wernick: I never said that. If you want to employ somebody and you are looking for somebody to work in a business and they are business oriented, you say, "What have you got to offer me?" The kid will say he has done this, he would have done his grade 12 and he will say, "I did business courses, I did this course, that course, the other course." You look at that and say, "Hey, this guy is really aiming for what I want." I do not see what is peculiar about that.

As opposed to that, you are going to say to the kid, "Have you got a grade 12 diploma?" He or she will say "Yes" and you will say "Fine," but it may not be fine. I know and people with teaching experience here know that we give away credits in this province by the thousand every June so that kids can graduate without dropping one subject. I have done it and anybody who is a teacher has done it.

It is a myth that the grade 12 diploma measures something and it is a myth that I would like to see destroyed.

Mr. Reyecraft: Let's talk about the new diploma. It indicates that a student has completed 30 credits. Each credit has to be certified by the principal, that the student has completed the work that normally would be completed in 120 hours. I think that says something.

Mr. Wernick: May I interrupt you? It does for those who get the credit. What Mr. Radwanski and other people are saying is that some massive number of our students do not get that far. I am suggesting they would get farther if we offered them a chance to do things they could do and want to do. I am sorry to interrupt you.

Mr. Reyecraft: That is fine.

Mr. Wernick: We could discuss this for a very long time.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Does your idea mean taking mandatory credits in the first three years?

Mr. Wernick: Yes.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: After having to take the mandatory courses for the first three years, you would probably chase three quarters of the students who are not terribly interested in school and not particularly successful in school out of the system in that three years anyway.

Mr. Wernick: Maybe so, maybe not; I do not know. My view is that most of our students, by the time they get to grade 12, know what they want to do. So they will meet the requirements.

Let me make this clear. These recommendations are not blueprints, they are signposts. I do not have any hope for this recommendation, as I have no hope for any of them, but my objective is that we should not be too smug about the idea that when you stamp 30 credits on a kid's forehead, that really means something, because in practical terms it does not mean as much as the public thinks it means. I am saying that as a teacher of 30 years' experience. I have taught some wonderful kids and I have also seen students go out with diplomas that to my mind were not worth the paper they were written on.

Is nobody going to ask me about part-time work?

Mr. Reycraft: I would like to, if I could go on to my second question, which does deal with part-time work. You have endorsed Mr. Radwanski's recommendation that students be discouraged or even prohibited from part-time work because it interferes with their educational progress. Most of the kids who work part-time, I assume, do so because they want the money.

Mr. Wernick: Yes.

Mr. Reycraft: If that is their motivation, and they have to choose between two options, either earning money being on the job or being in school, do you not think there is a danger that a lot of them will choose the former of those two options?

Mr. Wernick: I do not quite follow your question.

Mr. Reycraft: You are saying that if they cannot go to school and work part-time, then they must choose one or the other.

Mr. Wernick: Yes.

Mr. Reycraft: Is there not a danger that they will choose to work instead of staying in school?

Mr. Wernick: I do not know. I believe there are parents involved in this. I believe the community is involved in this. I believe em-

ployers, many of whom are responsible, are involved in this. I have talked to Rotary Club groups that were rather interested in what I had to say. You might be right.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Rotary Clubs might not necessarily be representative of a lot of people's kids.

Mr. Wernick: No, but they are representative of employers. That is what I meant by talking about Rotary. I was well received by them.

To come back to your question, what I am saying is you cannot have one or the other. If kids want to, as they do, they now work 30 to 40 hours a week. We are talking about five days' work a week. We are talking about night-time work. In exceptional cases, we are talking about all-night work.

If they want to do that, then they had better do it. But they cannot go to school and we cannot expect the kind of achievement in the system that we do expect with this situation going on. That is what I am saying.

Mr. Reycraft: I do not think there are very many kids who work all night and who work five nights a week and two days on the weekends.

Mr. Wernick: You are totally mistaken. Let me offer a challenge. I watched Barbara Frum talk to a sociologist on this question. Do you remember that?

Mr. Reycraft: There is an authority on education.

Mr. Wernick: I would challenge you or anybody else to do this—if I am hysterical about it, fine—(1) talk to the people in the schools and ask them; (2) go out tonight, visit a number of hotdog stands, doughnut shops, pizza places and fast-food places generally. See who is working there at 10 p.m. Ask them when they are going to knock off. When you have done that, tell me I am exaggerating.

Mr. Reycraft: My point was there are students who do that. I do not disagree with that. I think that represents a very small proportion of the total number of students in this province. Your recommendation assumes that if the students are not in part-time jobs, they will be doing assignments, studying and completing their homework. You have taught for 30 years, did you say?

Mr. Wernick: Yes.

Mr. Reycraft: Surely, you must admit that is not a safe assumption to make.

Mr. Wernick: Of course, I know that. I mean, I am totally realistic; it is not a safe assumption to

make. I was in a classroom last year. I went back to the classroom to do some supply teaching. If you are a teacher—and some of you are familiar with this—teachers, poor naïve creatures that they are, go into the classroom under the assumption that the rules have not changed.

The student has five or six credit subjects a day. Each teacher is expected to give that student and wants that student to prepare adequately for that meeting. So there should be something like four or five sets of homework for a student to do. If you think students are going to put that preparation first, then you are very naïve. Our assumption as teachers is that for the normal student today work comes first, school comes second, and social life, etc., are third or fourth. For many students, school work comes about fourth or fifth. It certainly never, never, never comes first. Well, there is the exception.

As a teacher, I learned, do not ask a student to come and see you at 3:15 p.m. unless you are looking for a confrontation. Experienced teachers learn not to look for confrontations. I realize you feel strongly about it, but you realize I do too.

Mr. Reycraft: All I can say is that the school at which you spent most of your time in Burlington must be a great deal different from the one in Middlesex where I taught for 19 years, because I do not share your view.

Mr. Wernick: I would like to hear what your colleagues say.

Mr. Reycraft: I will surrender to someone else.

Madam Chairman: It is not a good policy to argue with one's chief whip, but I must say from my own subjective experience, I was quite appalled last year to find that my 12-year-old's friends had part-time jobs. In fact, it was the norm for them to have jobs on Thursday evenings, Friday evenings and Saturday. I had quite an argument with my son to convince him that it would interfere with his school work to be doing this, and the motivation was simply money.

Mr. Wernick: Yes, that is right.

1040

Madam Chairman: I was quite shocked. I think a couple of years ago I would have definitely agreed with Mr. Reycraft, but I was quite shocked to find the opposite.

Mr. Wernick: Thank you.

Mr. Reycraft: Money motivates a lot of us.

Madam Chairman: I have just ruined my political career on your behalf, Mr. Wernick; you realize that.

Mr. Furlong: Did you raise his allowance?

Mr. Wernick: May I make this point, by the way, about money? I was waiting for Mr. Johnston. I am sorry he is not here today, because I thought he would have been interested in this.

On this question about needing the money, I think I could have been attacked by saying I taught in a middle-class area, etc.; what about kids who need the money? What about these kids in single-parent families or groups who economically need this money? Am I not being tough on them? I used to shuffle my feet on this.

After my article appeared, I had a letter from a principal in the Jane and Bloor area. I will not name him; I have not asked his permission. He lauded me for my article. He has been trying to make this point for years, and the point he made that should have occurred to me was that the very students who "need the money" because they really need it also need the education, because without it they will never break out of that poverty-trap cycle. In Burlington and places, you flunk a year because you are working and your parents are going to say, as I said, "Okay, you repeat it, but watch it," the kind of thing you are talking about, Madam Chairman. Kids in the Jane and Bloor area and other places do not have that safety net. They need the money all right, but they need the education more.

Madam Chairman: I guess, as Mr. Reycraft says, though, the dilemma is that if you put in this type of rule, do you force the children to make the kind of decision that would be very regrettable—that they will leave the school rather than leave their work?

Mr. Wernick: Right; oh, absolutely.

Madam Chairman: So it is a real dilemma.

Mr. Wernick: Absolutely.

Madam Chairman: We have not only run short of time, we have run out. We will accept one more question from Mr. Villeneuve.

Mr. Villeneuve: It follows on part-time jobs, and it is very interesting to hear your suggestions. As one with 30 years of teaching experience, when did you first start noticing that jobs were taking priority to education? Was it when semestering came in?

Mr. Wernick: No.

Mr. Villeneuve: When did you first notice that, all of a sudden, there was a change in values?

Mr. Wernick: That is right. I wish I had another 15 minutes, because I think you have hit the nub. People divert attention from this by

saying: "I worked when I was at school. It did me no harm." My children worked, and I certainly encouraged them to do so.

What I am saying is that normal work, which is at the supermarket Friday night and Saturday at age 15—it was good and the kids got some money, etc.—has changed, I would guess, in the last three, four, five years. It is impossible to put a date on it.

For me, as a teacher, it took a single incident to focus it. It is the way these things do, it is like you have an irritation that goes on and on and you ignore it and you work around it, and then a single incident, which I cannot tell you about now—we do not have time—focused it for me, a single student.

Then I started to ask and I started to look at the situation. The simple fact of the matter is that, numbers or not to the contrary, Mr. Reycraft, some 98 per cent of grade 12 and 13 students work. Those are not my figures. Halton county did a survey on that. It was over 95 per cent—perhaps 97; maybe I am a point out—of grade 12 students, and as Madam Chairman pointed out, the problem goes down into the elementary schools, so it is there. It is there.

I noticed it in my last couple of years, when, frankly, I was becoming tired of the stress of confrontation with students who seemed to me to be less and less prepared. Again, you might say my arteries are hardening, my teaching skills, etc., but when I talk to my younger colleagues, they were even stronger, if anything, on the issue, believe me. The feedback I have had, people stopping me on the streets and shaking my hand and saying, "Somebody needs to say this," does not make me likely to suggest, as Mr. Reycraft does, that I am merely dealing with something which has not really changed.

Mr. Villeneuve: It is very interesting. As a last comment, I think the part-time job, as long as it is complementary to the school, is a learning process for young people and it is very valuable in assisting them possibly to make a choice in careers and whatever. Having been born and raised on a dairy farm, where chores had to be done before the school bus came in the morning and after it came back at night, I think I understand, but that is a little different story again. The work I did was to be able to get use of the family buggy on the weekend, if you follow what I mean, and there was no monetary incentive there, but it is a character builder to a point, as long as the priorities are right and school comes first. Quite obviously, we have things in

somewhat of a disarray and in the wrong area of jurisdiction and priorities.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Thank you, Mr. Wernick, for coming and giving us a very stimulating conversation this morning. Maybe you should not be so cynical. Things may change and recommendations made be made, so we very much appreciate your contribution this morning.

Mr. Wernick: I hope so, Madam Chairman, and thank you very much indeed for your courtesy and the questions I have received. I hope it has been of some use to perhaps stimulate a couple of points you might not otherwise hear.

Madam Chairman: Our next presenters, I am pleased to say, are a group of parents from North Toronto. Please come forward. Welcome to our committee. The members have received copies of your brief and all, I am sure, have done their homework and read them. We look forward to hearing your additional comments. Perhaps you would begin by identifying yourselves for purposes of electronic Hansard. We have allocated 30 minutes for your full presentation and questions, so if you could possibly leave time at the end for questions, we would be very appreciative. Please begin whenever you are ready.

MARY MUTER, MARGARET COLAPINTO,
MARY BRERETON AND SUE MUSSELMAN

Mrs. Muter: Let me introduce myself. I am Mary Muter and to my right is Margaret Colapinto. To my immediate left is Mary Brereton, president of the Northern Secondary School Parents Association and to her left is Sue Musselman, president of the Blythwood School Parents Association.

Madam Chairman and members of the select committee, we have been involved for many years in our local school parents' associations. I have participated and written responses to different task forces and proposals put forth by our local board.

We are now very aware of students' and parents' concerns about the present OSIS system in public secondary schools. This is obvious at the various parents' school meetings, but it is beyond the mandate of the secondary schools and parents do not see any clear way to convey their concerns to the ministry. In fact, it is only the ministry and the provincial government that have the authority to make these changes.

I would also like you to understand that we are parents of students who for the most part are taking courses at the advanced or advanced

enriched levels. The local secondary schools in North Toronto offer courses mainly at these levels and so this is where our experience comes from.

We will now go into some more detail of the points and recommendations we have made. Margaret Colapinto will begin.

Mrs. Colapinto: I am going to discuss two of the issues we find very concerning as parents and as citizens of Ontario because our children's future is of course going to influence our country greatly.

We are concerned about grade promotion. We feel there should be standardized testing at the grade 6 and grade 8 levels because a number of our children, as mentioned in the brief, come from feeder schools into a junior high school or a high school. There are very different levels of education and a good deal of time is spent bringing these children up to grade level before they can actually begin the curriculums for the grade 7 and the grade 9 programs.

We think one way to solve some of the problems with this situation is to move the curriculum back so that children are receiving education in grade 3, for example, that they possibly would be getting in grade 4. They have done this in the private schools and it has worked quite well. In the future, it would avoid these children having to cram at a later time. As we all know, when children cram, they do not retain well; it is not committed to long-term memory. It is also very a bad habit to get into learning that way. Often, they have to cram to get through their number of credits in high school. They will have set a very bad precedent for study methods.

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The other concern we have is what we call dead-ending for young people. A number of young people are either counselled or they choose to drop subjects that are not required, that are not any of the 16 requirements for graduation from high school. They are often counselled, for example, to drop mathematics without fully appreciating how that is going to influence them in the future and what a drastic effect it will have on any career they might choose.

Possibly a child in grade 10 would feel he does not want to continue taking mathematics. They might even think that in the future they are going to do something like social work or psychology that is not going to require mathematics, but indeed, all of these futures do require mathematics because you have to have statistics or you do not get through, and you cannot do statistics without math.

We feel these children should receive better counselling at that level so that they fully appreciate the impact on their future. We think they should be given more academic help at that level if they require that help to continue with their mathematics program. Often, I think young people will take the path of least resistance and if they are offered the opportunity to graduate from high school without doing a particular subject, they will choose that. We feel very strongly that there needs to be much better counselling at that level and much better help for the child.

Mrs. Brereton: I wish to speak about the optional four-year or five-year program. I am speaking about it from the point of view of students who are planning to go on to some form of post-secondary education, at university or community college.

Students who are now planning to complete the program in four years in the public school system must essentially condense their four years into three years. That is the way the course structure has been set up. They must know exactly what they want to do, so that they have the necessary prerequisites so that they can get the courses they need to get into the university of their choice.

There is no room for mistakes. If they make mistakes, often they have to go to summer school or night school to make up for a course they have inadvertently left out. It is really a difficult process to get them all in. There is also no room for timetable problems, which seem to be increasing in number.

They also have to be prepared to give up some of the optional courses. For example, it is very difficult to take physical education, something I feel most students should take throughout high school, if possible. It is hard to take that for the full four years if they have a plan of action. They may have to give up something like music or some of the other optional courses that are offered such as computer science, economics and law. They have to avoid some of these interesting options that are offered them. At the same time, I wonder if they are getting the breadth of education. If they do select a few of these options, they are missing some of the traditional courses that we expect students with a well-rounded education to have—all of the math, science, history, geography and a second language throughout. It is not easy to cram it all into four years.

It is a challenging program. I have no doubt about that. The six Ontario academic courses usually come in the last year. They practically

have to do that in order to meet the requirements and I wonder if it is the best education for them in the way it is currently set up.

By contrast, those students who go for the full five years and plan to do that have no difficulty in obtaining the necessary credits. Some of them in fact will have enough credits to get their graduation diploma at the end of four years. Then they come back for a fifth year and they have already graduated.

To me, this is an awkward situation. Spares tend to be the norm. They have time for that. Very few actually plan to get the total of 40 credits that you could get in a five-year program. Often, the OACs are spread out over two years. I wonder if this is wise. I wonder if these students are going to be disillusioned about their true capabilities. It is a lot different taking six required OACs for university in one year from spreading them out over two years, or in some cases three years.

I am wondering if they are going to have an accurate assessment of their own abilities for their future in university and I am wondering if we have not introduced yet another variable in the assessment of students for post-secondary education. There seem to be many variables now between schools and the way they are assessed. Now, if they spread them out over two or three years, this introduces still another variable.

What we are finding in the school I am involved with is that a lot of the students, the ones who have the potential for four years and the ones who are planning to do it in five years, in fact do not always end up doing what they set out to do. I alluded before to timetabling problems. It is very difficult, even in a large school, to offer all the options students wish.

A student in second year may select courses from second year, third year or fourth year. When you compound that over all the grades, it is a timetabling problem to get for each student the individual timetable he wants. Sometimes students are forced into situations they had not wanted to be forced into. They have to select a course either a grade ahead or eliminate a course they had planned to take. For the four-year students, that means they are in difficulty. They cannot meet the requirements they planned to do in four years. For the five-year students, sometimes they are ahead of themselves without really wanting to be ahead of themselves. They take, say, third-year biology instead of second-year biology because it is more convenient from a timetabling point of view.

One of the things we are finding is that students end up with a four-and-a-half-year program. That is the most convenient time frame in which to complete their diploma. One of the ways students have handled this four-and-a-half-year situation is to take those three or four courses that they have to get in a semestered situation. They will take three or four courses and finish some time in January.

To me, this is not the right way to go about things, to be forced into taking semestered courses or to be taking semestered courses simply because they have not been able to get either the four-year or the five-year course. They are sort of stuck in this in-between state.

Semestered courses may serve a purpose. Personally, I would not like to see them become standard. I have heard from several education people that in semestered courses, about 20 per cent of the course content is eliminated in order that the students can assimilate the information in the time available.

It is very difficult to keep up with the pace. When you take one complete course in only half a year, illness becomes a very difficult situation. A student in a semestered course who is away for two weeks has missed essentially the same that a student who was away for a whole month in a regular course would miss. Then when he comes back to school, he has to work at twice the speed to catch up. I just do not want to see semestered courses proliferating for this reason. I think they have problems of their own.

As far as the semestered courses are concerned, we now have students who are switching schools in their final year so that they can go to a school that offers semestered courses. This is difficult for both the students and the schools. The sending school loses some of its top, bright people who are looked up to and who generate a lot of school spirit. They are lost to another school. The receiving school does not gain this school spirit, because unfortunately, those kids do not really know the new school. They are just there for a very short time and offer nothing to the school community.

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The students are fragmented. The credit system, as it is set up, means students often travel with individual timetables. They go from one course where they may know some kids a little bit and then take another course and know a few others there. They do not always get to know a really secure group of friends. Some of them come from very insecure home situations, as you know, too. If they have to change in their fifth

year, to go and get their last few courses at a semestered school, I feel this is very unfortunate for them. It puts emotional stress on them.

Our recommendation coming out of all of this is that we feel it would be wise to establish a normal pattern for students, either a good four-year program, where some of the course content is moved down into the earlier grades and you do not have to cram the last four years into three years if you are going to do the four-year program, or a five year program as the norm for those students who are going on for post-secondary education. There can always be exceptions, and I do not like to remove some of the flexibility, but at the moment the norm seems to be the four-and-a-half-year program. To me, that is unsatisfactory and does not provide excellence in education.

I will now pass it back to Mrs. Muter to continue.

Mrs. Muter: I will now explain our third recommendation to you as it relates to streaming. The recommendation is that the present system of three different levels be maintained in secondary schools and that schools be encouraged to assist students who wish to change levels as their needs change. To begin with, we cannot imagine any responsible secondary school teacher agreeing with the Radwanski recommendation on ending streaming. Most of the teachers we have talked with feel it would be an impossible task to teach only one level of OSIS courses.

To give you an example of what might happen, I can recall one parents' meeting on curriculum at our local senior public school where the principal was explaining to the parents the difficulties of setting up curriculum at the grade 7 level when the students coming to the school had reading levels ranging from grade 3 to grade 12. The school had a form of streaming where, by choosing courses, the students were grouped together according to ability. Then, with very little warning, they abolished that streaming and the entire level of courses was brought down to the lowest common denominator. Where previously the brighter students had been challenged, they were suddenly forced to sit through classes that were mainly reviews for them. Since some of the students were reading at a low level, all of the students had to take silent reading classes.

The consequences of ending streaming at the secondary level would, in our opinion, only increase the dropout rate at all levels as fewer students' needs would be met. Students need to be challenged and stimulated at their own level in

order for success to be obtained by them. This is key to providing a good education environment, something we all want in a democratic society.

I understand there are some boards that offer only one level of courses. I have one question for you. How many students have chosen other schools, transferred out or dropped out? These figures are impossible to obtain since most parents and students do not let a school know why they are leaving.

In summary, we are asking you to take the pressure off the students and schools by moving the entire curriculum down to allow secondary school students time to easily complete the credits in four years, if they want to, and to then have time for physical and health education and important extracurricular activities, to develop a meaningful and healthy lifestyle.

In closing, I would like to say that we are only too familiar with the length of time it takes to make changes in the education system. The secondary education review project was written in 1982, and now, six years later, parents and students are struggling with it. We are here today because we have children currently in the process and we want these changes made as quickly as possible in order that our children will benefit. We ask that you support our recommendations and move as quickly as possible to implement these recommendations.

Thank you. We will attempt to answer questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mrs. Muter, for your very articulate and well-thought-out presentation. You certainly gave us a strong hands-on viewpoint of some of the difficulties that you perceive are in the system, and I found them quite interesting.

Just before I open for questions from the members, I have one myself. A number of the presenters who have come before us so far have urged us not to make any decision on OSIS until full implementation has been made. Basically, they were saying it will be another year anyway, I suspect, before they really have their viewpoint confirmed and consolidated, because that is really when the first children will have completely gone through the system.

I am just wondering, in your recommendation where you say that the Minister of Education should make a decision about either four years or five years and provide that stability, are you suggesting that be done immediately or that we wait a certain length of time until OSIS is completed?

Mrs. Muter: No, I do not think you should wait until OSIS is fully implemented. I do not think it is fair to the students and parents right now who are in a lot of anguish over it. I think, yes, go ahead with continuing to implement it but, in the meantime, make it easier for students in either four years or five years, not four and a half years.

Madam Chairman: Do you attribute a major proportion of the problem to OSIS itself or do you think it is compounded by the semestering? Have you had a chance to analyse that? For instance, yesterday a teacher who was before us made the statement that, generally speaking, teachers did not like semestering but students did. We have not really had a lot of feedback in this regard, so I was wondering if you had any comments on that.

Mrs. Muter: Perhaps Mrs. Brereton could you answer that.

Mrs. Brereton: Well, perhaps students like semestering because it is perceived to be an easier route, and it is if you drop 20 per cent of the course content, which I gather is happening because the teachers find it impossible to include it all. You are concentrating on fewer subjects at one time, so that too makes it easier.

I am wondering, though, if you are not missing something in the process. I for one am not keen on it. You miss the interrelationship between courses. If you are in math and sciences, for example, something you learn in physics and something you learn in chemistry may be seen from different points of view in the two disciplines and, all of a sudden, lights click on and you think, "Wow, isn't that great." But in the semester system you do not have that opportunity. I do not think students always know what it is they are missing if they are in the semester system. They know it is an easy route and so they select it.

Mrs. Muter: I guess we feel OSIS is forcing semestering. I feel semestering should evolve naturally. It should not be forced on the schools or the students.

Mrs. Brereton: I know that at Northern they decided to introduce optional semestering for the final year in order not to lose—well, one of the reasons, I do not know that this is the only reason—one of the reasons was not to lose students to other schools that are semestered and are outside the Toronto board.

It works to an extent. There is a fairly high dropout rate because students find it is difficult to keep up. They have the option, though, of

switching into a total year program since both are both offered at the same school.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We will move to members' questions: Mr. Keyes followed by Mrs. O'Neill.

Mr. Keyes: It is a great pleasure to come back to spend some time on education after being the last six weeks on Sunday shopping and listening to the same 18 briefs three times a day. But I have a little concern. Maybe I am becoming a little bit lazy. I have a feeling you ladies are trying to go back to an era you visited yourselves in schooling and that I visited, only much sooner than you did.

Mr. Mahoney: Probably longer too.

Mr. Keyes: That is right, and one that I spent a lot of time in teaching. Am I misinterpreting? You are trying to get back into saying it is four years or it is five years; there is no flexibility in there. If we think of one of the last gentlemen's presentations where he was concerned about part-time work, I think that our current system does allow more flexibility for the student and I think we are in too big a rush to try to get our young people through.

Last week I watched the young frosh at Queen's and spent three days with them.

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Mrs. O'Neill: You should not be doing that, Mr. Keyes.

Mr. Keyes: That is what keeps me young. You would not realize I was 75, would you?

A number of them are 17 years of age this year. It is a phenomenal thing—a really quite frightened group of young people who are in the university milieu, particularly at Queen's with those engineers. It was frightening for them.

Madam Chairman: It is frightening to anybody.

Mr. Keyes: I really think we are pushing too hard. I was just wondering, are you trying to get back to that? I have several things I would like you just to comment on. The semestering bothers me when you suggest—it is the first time I have heard it suggested publicly—that there is perhaps a 20 per cent reduction in course content. I know some of the problems of semestering from talking to high school teachers in the fields of the arts, music, band and vocal work and things of this nature, but have found it great for some of the other subjects. Where are you really wanting to head in this?

Mrs. Brereton: I do not want to eliminate semestering but I do not want this four-and-a-half-year business to be a reason for introducing

it. I think four and a half years is a ludicrous system where students—

Mr. Keyes: What is so wrong with four and a half years?

Mrs. Brereton: What are these students going to do after half a year? They graduate probably after their fourth year and come back. It sort of casts a stigma on the old six-year man of "Can't you do it in four?" It is a funny situation when you graduate and then come back for three courses.

Mr. Keyes: I just do not share that. I think the flexibility has some merits to it. They may want to go out and work.

Mrs. Brereton: I am not saying eliminate it.

Mr. Keyes: They may want to go travelling. There are a lot of things like that.

Mrs. Brereton: There is nothing to say that they could not do that if they so chose, but right now, that seems to be the norm. We would like a better norm where the majority of the students seem to go either four or five. I find now that a lot of the students in selecting their fifth year—and they are just doing that now because I think it is the first year that is coming through—it is difficult to get a reasonable, total five-year program without spreading your Ontario academic courses around. It is just a messy system.

When I started working through it with my son, I was disappointed. I did not like the system. I felt he could have easily done it in four years, except for the course content. To get all the prerequisites, especially in math and sciences, is difficult because it is a very structured prerequisite system.

Mr. Keyes: The only other comment I would make is that I just cannot quite agree with saying, "Make the changes now." I liken changes in this system of education, or in health where I have much more connection, to trying to alter the course or reverse the direction of the Queen Mary. If you try to throw it in full left or right direction, it takes a long while to stop it or to turn it around.

I think you have to evolve through a fair number of years. I would not see us trying to make dramatic changes right now before you know, as the chairman said, the full impact of the system you are trying to do. I think you should be constantly aware of where the pressures from students and parents are evolving and then make these gradual changes. I think you are looking for too much maybe too soon, personally; that may not be shared by anyone else.

Mrs. Muter: If I could make a comment on that, one of the things that I think is said is that this is the only jurisdiction, whatever you want to say, in North America that does offer five years of high school. I cannot believe that our students are any different than they are anywhere else.

The other thing that we are trying to explain to you is the reason for the changes needing to come now. I can give you an example. In one of our local high schools, last year they took a poll and they asked the grade 9 students, "How many of you would like to complete it in four years?" and half the students put their hands up.

The school is not prepared for the kids to do it in four years. Those kids are all going to summer school, night school, fitting it all in, cramming it in, in order to do it in four years. I do not think that is a reasonable thing to be asking of these kids. My son came home and said, "My friends are all going to summer school." We said: "Forget it. You need some time off in the summer." That is why we are saying—

Mr. Keyes: So your plea is more to try to do it in four.

Mrs. Muter: Make it so that it is flexible that they can do it in four years and five years. Do not put pressure on them to do it either way. Do not leave it at four and a half.

Mr. Keyes: I will share my time.

Mrs. O'Neill: I did find your comments about illness and semestering interesting. I had not heard that. I guess you really do need to be a mother to see the problems that may—

Mr. Reycraft: That is a sexist comment.

Mrs. O'Neill: I have just been told that is a sexist comment. Maybe you have to be a parent, I will say, to see that.

I have heard your difficulty in trying to come to grips with OSIS and semestering in the high school and I do not think I can ask anything further that would be any more enlightening there. But I would like to go to your first recommendation which is a standardized test at the end of grade 8.

I have some difficulty with that, so maybe you would like to tell me a bit more about why you feel that is important. I am sure you are aware that there is a lot of testing going on at the elementary schools. The Canadian test of basic skills goes on in every school in the province; that is a standardized examination of basic skill and certainly many people question whether even its results are authentic. There are all kinds of other tests. There are other tests individual school boards have, regarding standards they have as

their own goals, and certainly individual schools and classroom teachers.

I have a lot of trouble with standardized tests, period, and certainly with children this young, I have some questions. Perhaps you would like to say a little more about that.

Mrs. Colapinto: First, I was not aware that there were any of these standardized, or whatever you want to call it, tests going around at this point. But I do know that the children who are going into the junior high schools are far from a homogeneous group as far as education goes. I only have one child who just started high school this year so I cannot speak for grade 9, but I know that at the grade 7 level they have to do a tremendous amount of reviewing in order to catch certain children up because these junior high schools do deal with a lot of feeder schools.

I just think there should be some way of standardizing the curriculum. I know the curriculum supposedly is standardized but that does not mean that children coming out of one feeder school are going to be educated the same way as children coming out of other schools. I think that somehow they have to make it so that teachers who receive children in grade 7 can start at a certain level and do not have to spend until Christmas reviewing to try to catch up. It is not fair to the students who are prepared to begin the curriculum.

Mrs. O'Neill: So you are really talking about entering the intermediate level at grade 7.

Mrs. Colapinto: No, at the high school level, as well; grade 9, as well.

Mrs. O'Neill: Of course that, particularly at the grade 9 level, is when so many different choices are available and so many levels of study are available. The idea of a homogeneous grouping is also really not what we are dealing with at the present. To talk to Mr. Keyes's point, there seems to be a request by most people that there be more individualization or more opportunities for individual strengths and weaknesses. This is why standardized testing is, in my humble opinion, not as good as what we have, where we do have many avenues people can go into depending on their abilities.

There may be enough people like yourself come forward, and we may come to the conclusion that we do need to have some tightening of standards. I certainly think all of us on this committee are pretty open-minded at this moment about what recommendations we are going to make. But there are certainly new ideas of provincial reviews and school boards are

trying to be more accountable at the ministry's direction.

I think it would be helpful if you would ask your particular school what kind of testing your child has had; I think you would find that there has been a fair amount of testing before they come to grade 7 or to grade 9. Whether you would want more than that is certainly your own choice.

Mrs. Colapinto: But we do have children going into grade 7, some of whom are reading, as Mrs. Muter said, at a grade 12 level, while others are reading at a grade 3 level, and they still get out of grade 6 and go to these schools.

Mrs. O'Neill: Yes, we had educators before us yesterday who talked about the principal's prerogative. That is very true.

Mrs. Colapinto: And that is not a fair situation for all of the children in that grade 7 class.

Mrs. O'Neill: Mind you, you will find the same thing if you enter year one at a community college.

Mrs. Colapinto: But you would not find the same thing if you entered grade 7 at a private school.

Mrs. O'Neill: I do not know. I certainly cannot make the same judgement as you because I do not have any data to base that on. I am sorry.

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Mrs. Colapinto: The only data I have are for people I know, and I do have one child in a private school. I know the children would not be put in grade 7 if they were not at a certain standard. I spoke to the director of education last year, had a meeting with him, and he said that our public school system should be exactly the same as the private school system, apart from the fact that the children are not segregated by sex and do not wear uniforms. It seems to me that our system is not the same.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Are you basically saying then that these standardized tests at grade 6 would be pass-or-fail tests?

Mrs. Colapinto: I know that sounds old-fashioned, but do they not have to bite the bullet some time? Why keep pushing these kids on and on and then they graduate from high school eventually? It does not seem right. A child should be properly prepared to enter the next grade.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: But then you start getting into the question of what we end up teaching for, and we end up teaching for tests.

Mrs. Colapinto: No, that is not true.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: That is what happens.

Mrs. Colapinto: Do you feel you educated yourself for tests? I am sure you had to write tests.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I did not have to go through that process.

Mrs. Colapinto: You must be a lot younger than I am. I had to and I do not think it is bad. When these kids get to university, are they going to say: "Okay, dear, here is your pass. It is okay. Just move on to the next grade"? They do not do that.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: No, I am just saying what ends up happening is that the teachers end up teaching for the tests, so that there is a certain level of achievement on the test, but that does not necessarily mean there has been a certain level of achievement through the first six years.

Mrs. Colapinto: Apparently we do have testing, though. What are they testing?

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I think the purpose of that testing is quite different from the purpose of the testing that you are talking about.

Mrs. Colapinto: What are they testing, their capability to learn how to read at a grade 7 level?

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I think they are testing the system and the overall achievement of the system, but not the individuals.

Mrs. Colapinto: But is that correct?

Mrs. O'Neill: Certainly, the Canadian test of basic skills is an individual test and that is also testing the entrance—

Mr. D. S. Cooke: The data are used differently.

Mrs. O'Neill: Pardon?

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I believe the data would be used to see how the system is.

Interjection: To examine the curriculum.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: And to adjust the curriculum.

Mrs. Colapinto: But what is the difference between saying you have to follow a specific curriculum and have your child, or a specific child, complete that curriculum before he goes on to another grade and saying that he should be able to write a test on what that curriculum has supposedly given him and then he can go on to another grade? Are you saying that teachers are going to teach differently if the child has to write a test?

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Yes.

Mrs. Colapinto: Is that a bad thing?

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I guess it gets down to what we discussed in the first two weeks we had hearings earlier in the year, the purpose of the system and what we are really trying to teach our children, whether we are trying to teach them content or whether we are trying to teach them how to learn and other aspects of the system, a basic fundamental difference in the purpose of the system.

Mrs. Colapinto: No, I appreciate that. I think teaching a child how to learn is very important. That is another reason why I feel that not moving the curriculum back is bad, because eventually that child is going to have to cram if he wants to finish something in a certain length of time. However, I still think there should be ways of assessing whether a particular child is ready to read at a grade 7 level and I do not think you should have to waste time until Christmas in grade 7 establishing that for everyone.

Mrs. O'Neill: I wonder if Mr. Lipischak, who is our evaluation person from the ministry, is here this morning and if he would say a little bit about what goes on in most elementary schools regarding this kind of thing. Is that okay?

Madam Chairman: Yes. Mr. Lipischak, would you like to come up and take one of the seats in front of the microphone? I know you are not prepared for the lights and the television this morning, but, being in this business, one has to adjust quickly.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am certainly not the expert on this. He is, and I would like him to try to put the record straight.

Mr. Lipischak: Actually, you have described the situation fairly well. The individual tests, the standardized tests that are used by school systems are the commercially produced tests, such as the Gates-McGinnity and McGraw-Hill Canadian battery of basic skills that you mentioned. Those are selected by the schools, by the board in some cases.

Some boards, such as the Ottawa Board of Education, the Carleton Board of Education and the Hamilton Board of Education, have developed a set of examinations of their own within the system. At the provincial level, there is no provincially established set of individual student testing for examinations. There has not been since 1967.

What we do have is the beginnings—a pilot done two years ago in geography and one being done this past year in senior level chemistry and physics and this coming year in grade 6 reading

and mathematics. What it does is matrix sampling, so it looks at groups of students and their achievement. The sample basis is the school level, so that the school gets its data back and can adjust its program because, along with student achievement data, it gets information about the program, how it teaches and what resources it uses, what evaluation techniques and so on. So it is an accountability process which does not put the individual student at risk, but gives the information back to the teachers in that school in terms of the program.

As these provincial reviews, as they are called, accumulate, out of them will come some expectations that may indeed turn out to be norms in terms of what students across the province have achieved over the years.

Mrs. Muter: That sounds like something that we will welcome very much. I think what we are concerned about is our bright students going into grade 9 and at parents' meetings the students are told that grade 9 is a review year. It is a big disillusionment to kids who have already achieved that level to spend a year reviewing. What you are saying might very well help that.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think we need to do a lot more work on the provincial reviews. We seem to have to bring them up every day.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much Mr. Lipischak. I think, from his comments you can tell that to a certain extent the province is going in that direction, not perhaps to the extent of standardized testing for all grade 6s across the province, but certainly testing the levels that children are at and whether the curriculum is actually being taught to the level of expectation of the ministry. I think that some of those initiatives will be very welcome by parents.

I would like to thank you very much for coming before us today. Again you have given us very thought provoking statements and certainly I think it has set members thinking about some of your recommendations.

The next group is the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. Would you please come forward? While we are waiting for the federation members to take their seats, I just mentioned to you, Mr. Keyes, that our Hansard reporter has said her daughter is in her freshman year at Queen's so you had better watch yourself.

Mr. Keyes: I will try to watch her.

Madam Chairman: I think that is precisely what she did not want to happen.

Mr. Keyes: I had a very pleasant meeting with 14 of them last Sunday evening.

Mrs. O'Neill: May I welcome Helen Penfold, our new president of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. I think this may be one of your first official tasks with the government, Helen. It is nice to welcome you.

Madam Chairman: We certainly hope you will not feel under fire. Again, you have given us a truly excellent brief. When I was reading it earlier I was quite impressed with a number of your comments. Would you please identify yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard. We have allocated an hour for your association, and if you would try to leave at least half of that time for questions, we would be very appreciative. You may begin whenever you are ready.

FEDERATION OF WOMEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS OF ONTARIO

Mrs. Penfold: Thank you very much. No, I do not feel under fire this morning. I very much welcome this opportunity to share our thoughts about the goals of education with the select committee. I am Helen Penfold, the president of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. Joan Westcott is our executive director and Marilyn Dickson is an executive assistant with FWTAO.

The FWTAO is a professional organization which represents 32,000 women teaching in the elementary schools in Ontario. We are pleased to take part in this continuing dialogue with the select committee on education concerning the education process in this province. As I go through my comments this morning, I will make references to certain page numbers within the brief that you have received.

As the topic for discussion in the second phase of consultation, the select committee identified the organization of the education process relating to OSIS streaming, grade promotion and semestering. At the July hearings the committee also requested further discussion of topics raised in FWTAO's initial submission. Therefore, we will take this opportunity to elaborate on these issues as well: special education; primary education, with reference to recent proposals for school programs for three-year olds; evaluation and heritage language programs.

We will attempt to address the select committee's concern with the role of the school system in a multicultural, multiracial society, and to respond to its stated interest in "the equal life chances and full development of each student."

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FWTAO shares the concern of the select committee on education and extends it to include

equality for female students and teachers and the position of women in society at large. FWTAO takes pride in our 70-year history as an advocate for women's equality, both in education and in society as a whole, and we have lobbied actively for legislation which will help to meet our goal of a truly equitable society for all component groups.

The first phase of consultation attracted presentations from organizations and individuals representing a broad cross-section of society. FWTAO is encouraged by this recognition of the importance of our schools and by the opportunity it provides to establish directions that will indeed reflect a common purpose.

We believe that any change to the current organization of our schools must be considered with care and justified by further public debate.

The provincial government has indicated that education is a priority. Recent reports from various sources have focused on topics such as teacher education, dropouts, the relevance of education and the role of education in the global economy, among others.

Among major trends affecting society's goals and expectations are changes in the racial and ethnocultural makeup of Ontario's population, increased pluralism, the breakdown of traditional community and family structures, poverty and unemployment and the continuing advance of technology. Their combined effect has been to inflict strains on society and its support systems, and these are expected to increase. Although the public may not expect the schools to solve these problems on their own, they must acknowledge the effects of these many social strains on students' learning.

Schools have become more responsive to the needs of students and their families. The education system has never done better for more students than it does today. Public debate and consensus must determine what attitudes, skills and knowledge will give students their best chance for success in a future world, whether schools are preparing students for further education, for the workforce or for responsible citizenship. The answers to these questions will determine the curriculum.

There appears to be general agreement that the basics for tomorrow will include the ability to cope with a change and a solid foundation in numeric skills and the full range of communication skills as the base for further learning. Schools can prepare for the unknown demands of a future workforce in only a general way. Within

this context, we will consider various aspects of the organization of the education process.

FWTAO is pleased to note that the terms of reference of the select committee describe education as a process. In the light of recent recommendations that the emphasis of educational philosophy should shift from process to outcome, this is an encouraging basis for discussion.

We believe that process and outcome are inextricably linked. True commitment to the concept of equal educational opportunity for all children demands that we take into account, in everything we do, the fact that all individuals learn differently. The needs of the learner—in the curriculum, in teaching methods, in school structures and practices—must take precedence in the education process.

OSIS resulted to some extent from the perception that the curriculum of the time had become too loose and did not provide young people with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes.

While FWTAO found much to praise in the new document, we also had major concerns, some of which remain to this day. These concerns relate primarily to issues involving grade 7 and 8 students, female students and exceptional students. The combination of intermediate and secondary guidelines in one document reflects the apparent ministry perception that students in grades 7 and 8 have more in common with secondary than with elementary students.

We believe that students in this age group are particularly at risk. The young adolescent is too vulnerable to be launched into the more impersonal secondary school environment. New practices, different teaching methods and separation from friends of many years can all contribute to a growing sense of alienation from the school system.

It is vital that school boards organize schools to reflect Ministry of Education policies and philosophy. Radwanski has proposed a system that would provide a home-room situation with common classes as far as possible for students in grades 9 and 10. Many grades 7 and 8 students, however, are on a full rotary program which is incompatible with the home-room approach. As well, the ministry has indicated strong support for an integrated approach to program delivery, yet in grades 7 and 8 the rotary system is subject-based.

We recognize that timetabling can pose major problems for small schools. However, we are

convinced that the risk of alienation for young adolescents is already so great that administrative expedience must not be allowed to dictate a system that puts them further in jeopardy.

In early adolescence, there is a particular need for educators to be aware of sex differences in cognitive development. FWTAO believes that promoting an awareness of career options and life choices is important in terms of achieving sex equity. However, we would like to see greater emphasis on equal opportunity for males and females in co-instructional programs.

The implementation of OSIS demonstrates the need for planning for the introduction of new policies, practices or curriculum. OSIS was introduced into the schools in September 1984. Four years later, the guidelines are not yet all in place.

FWTAO is pleased to note that recently there have been indications that the ministry is becoming more concerned about implementation, but we continue to stress that planning for the necessary human and financial resources is also essential. In the federation's view, if the Ministry of Education introduces new policies, it must also assume the responsibility for providing the necessary support and resources. If, on the other hand, a school board introduces a policy, the board should be responsible for its implementation.

Now I will address my comments to the area of streaming on page 11.

In elementary schools, there are many ways in which teachers organize their classrooms for instructional purposes. Grouping by ability or by the level of achievement is just one method. Often a teacher's choice of grouping method is influenced by either the availability of or the lack of appropriate learning materials and resources.

FWTAO stresses the need for flexibility in determining the most appropriate way to group students within a class. A child-centred approach to teaching and learning accepts and respects the skills and abilities that each child brings to the classroom and it builds on them. Such an approach recognizes that all children learn differently and that at the elementary level, in particular, they develop at different rates.

The federation believes that besides being inhumane to treat children with a wide range of abilities in precisely the same way, it would also contribute to the complex problems that cause some students to drop out of school in later years.

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Teachers use a range of strategies and techniques according to the needs of their classroom

and their individual students. We would hesitate to oppose grouping by achievement level under any circumstances when in some instances it may be appropriate.

FWTAO does agree with the need for a stable classroom environment that permits students to study common subjects together whenever possible. This is generally the case in the primary and junior divisions, but by grades 7 and 8, students may be studying separate subjects on a rotary system and may not spend time in a home-room situation.

On grade promotion, FWTAO interprets grade promotion to mean the promotion of children from grade to grade on an annual basis regardless of their level of achievement; what Radwanski termed "automatic social promotion."

There is little evidence that retention benefits a young child. Again we note the different learning styles of children and their different rates of development. We stress also that at every stage, confidence and self-esteem are vital to the learning process. What we have frequently proposed is the establishment of clear outcome goals by division rather than by grade to allow for the different rates of development of individual students. We are convinced that providing programs that allow most young children to learn successfully is a better solution than either remediation or retention.

FWTAO supports activity-based programs developed through an integrated curriculum with emphasis on the development of language and numeric skills. Continuous observation supplemented by evaluation on a divisional basis would provide a far better indicator of an individual child's progress and abilities.

We believe too that better use could be made of the divisions of elementary schools. Now that junior kindergarten is the norm, we should be considering revisions to the current organization of the divisions. The primary division could include kindergarten to grade 2, whereas grades 3 to 5 would comprise the junior division. An intermediate division that includes grades 6 to 8 would reflect the greater apparent maturity of today's grade 6 students and earlier adolescence. FWTAO still sees a clear division between grade 8 and grade 9 as the beginning of secondary school.

Now a comment on semestering. There is no semestering in elementary schools and FWTAO leaves detailed discussion of this issue to other presenters. However, we do have one area of concern in the transition from elementary school to secondary school and the choices that students

make in their courses for grade 9. They must be very careful to choose appropriate courses because they could end up in a situation of not taking a particular subject for several months and that could be of detriment to their schooling.

Other issues: In response to questions from various members of the select committee at the July hearings, FWTAO takes this opportunity to engage in further discussion of topics raised during our earlier presentation.

Evaluation: Evaluation is an essential part of the learning process for student and teacher alike. The federation recognizes the need for clear outcome objectives for students, but refutes proposals for standardized province-wide testing or examinations as the road to better achievement.

FWTAO's policy on standards, pupil evaluation and province-wide testing is found on page 16 of your document. We are opposed to province-wide standardized testing. It is our policy that:

Standards be set clearly and expectations be defined for students at every divisional level of the elementary school;

These standards and expectations reflect objectives for the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of individual children;

The effective assessment of student learning be based on the teacher's systematic observation and documentation of the process, content and context of the learning;

The reporting of student achievement provide parents with a clear understanding of their children's progress;

Standardized tests be only one of many tools that teachers use to assess individual student progress in such fundamental areas as speaking, listening, reading, writing and problem-solving.

Our brief earlier to the select committee stated: "Observation is the primary assessment tool used by teachers in activity-based learning settings. Recorded on a continuous basis, the teacher's comments provide a clear picture of the child's progress and learning patterns and assist the teacher to develop an appropriate program for that child. This system is also valuable in the identification of difficulties or the need for intervention."

Committed as we are to the belief that all children learn differently, FWTAO cannot support the concept of benchmarks as the means to establish either the ability or potential of a young student. There is now recognition that all children have a range of potentials, which cannot be accurately gauged by the imposition of

standardized tests. Rather, FWTAO supports the development of various means to improve parental understanding and support for good classroom curriculum, evaluation and reporting practices. We are convinced that improved communication between the home and the school will do far more to support the efforts of the child and encourage school success.

We support the use of assessment tools available through the Ontario assessment instrument pool, although we still see the need for a statement from the Ministry of Education regarding the ethical use of such tools. FWTAO maintains that all testing must be diagnostic in nature, a position which is incompatible with the concept of standardized province-wide testing. We stress again the dangers of teaching to a test, a practice which has little application to the acquisition and measurement of knowledge, attitudes and higher-level skills and fails to acknowledge the different experiences that young children bring to the classroom.

FWTAO supports the Ministry of Education's pilot curriculum-based student assessment program. The focus is on the curriculum rather than on the individual student, who remains anonymous. The program is cost-effective, respects the integrity of teaching and learning, measures students' mastery of specific curricular objectives and provides the data necessary for making program adjustments. It is especially significant in that it eliminates the negative consequences of standardized testing as it has been practised in the past in Ontario and elsewhere.

We also support the ministry's intention to use this provincial review model to assess the achievement of grade 6 students in mathematics and reading, which will provide important information to the public and to the profession.

I will now present my comments on special education, found on page 20 of our brief. Special-education legislation mandated in the Education Act every child's right to an education appropriate to his or her needs and abilities. Though expensive and difficult for boards to implement, the requirements of the legislation were humane and equitable. They supported the goal of equal educational opportunity for all children, as well as the concept of the individual learner with different needs and abilities. While FWTAO supported the philosophy of the special-education legislation, we did have some specific reservations about its feasibility.

The select committee has requested the reaction of elementary teachers now that the legislation has been in effect for some time. It would be

possible to outline a variety of impressions but they would not necessarily indicate unanimity. Teachers' different experiences depend to a large extent on the policies and practices of individual school boards and schools and on local needs and circumstances.

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For example, when identification and placement review committees were introduced, there was no provision for release time for teachers and the meetings were sometimes held after school hours. Now, however, the majority are held during the day and teachers are often not included in the IPRC meetings, either for their current students or for incoming students. In some cases, only the school principal will participate. In such instances, there is a clear need for supply teachers to enable the classroom teacher to take part during the school day.

There is often a time lag, when a child is already in the classroom and is waiting to be tested. An additional frustration often arises when students are identified as needing assistance. Frequently, those most at risk cannot get the treatment they need. The appropriate help is simply not available. There are not enough school psychiatrists, social workers or other necessary personnel.

Another consideration is the way a school is organized. On a rotary system, where a student may have a number of different teachers, there is no specific responsibility allocated for identification of need.

It is difficult for a teacher to respond to the special needs of exceptional students while continuing to provide all students with the attention they require. At FWTAO's annual meeting in August 1988, the delegates unanimously passed a motion "that FWTAO, through OTF, urge the ministry to determine a weighting factor for exceptional children who are integrated into a regular class in order to: (a) reduce class size for the regular classroom program; (b) provide additional funding for the regular classroom program; and (c) provide additional resources to support the regular classroom teacher."

Among continuing concerns are other matters related to integration into the regular classroom: the provision of in-service programs, the number of students identified as having behavioural problems, and the difficulty of assessing health-care services for physically disabled students.

Reports from our members indicate that integration is working well for many boards provided there is constant monitoring and con-

stant re-evaluation. Adequate preparation is essential in order for integration to be successful. This includes education for student teachers and professional development for current teachers.

In situations where exceptional children are to enter the regular classroom, teachers must not only be sensitive to and equipped to provide for their needs, but also must be able to facilitate acceptance by other students in the class.

Mainstreaming exceptional students does not of itself guarantee their integration. For the exceptional student in particular, there is a need to ensure continuity, both from grade to grade and between regular and withdrawal classes.

Disabled students may require a variety of health support services. While we recognize the costs involved, we stress the need for health support services.

To provide a productive, integrated educational experience for all students, teachers must be able to count on appropriate support services which meet the social, emotional and physical needs of their students.

Besides the move towards integration of exceptional children in the regular classroom, general trends include a more holistic view of the child, as well as the early identification of special learning needs when possible. As a preventive model, early identification is one of the most important aspects of special education. It is a more informal, co-operative and positive approach to helping students. Continuous evaluation is necessary to monitor the student's progress and parents are an important part of both the programs and the evaluation process.

Self-esteem, important for all learners, is particularly important for exceptional students. A continuing concern to FWTAO is the manner in which some teachers and other students may display negative attitudes towards gifted students, especially female gifted students. Research has shown marked underachievement in gifted girls to a point where one teacher observed that "gifted and female becomes an antithetic term." If we are trying to meet the needs of all exceptional students, special attention is necessary in this area.

In summary, in spite of specific experiences that may differ according to local circumstances, teachers are in general agreement on a number of issues related to their ability to provide appropriate programs for their exceptional students.

On page 27 you will find the policy on class size, which FWTAO first adopted in 1975 and revised at the 1988 annual meeting.

Primary education: FWTAO has long been committed to the philosophy of personalized and individualized programs for young children within a curriculum designed around play. Our policy states that such a curriculum provides young children in a school with the opportunity to achieve optimal development in an active learning environment. Through play, a child becomes aware of his or her world and begins to understand it. Children learn through interaction with their environment. They need concrete, firsthand experiences before they become able to understand abstract concepts. They need experiences that will involve all of the senses and experiences that will lead to the development of logical thinking, writing and mathematical skills.

Quality learning experiences require a quality learning environment. Activity-based learning centres that will facilitate the delivery of an integrated curriculum must be equipped with adequate resources and learning materials. FWTAO believes that parents are the earliest and primary agents in a child's development. At the same time, as a woman's organization committed to representing the interests of young children, we are well aware of the need for high-quality child care.

Today, many parents work outside the home. They want quality daytime experiences for their children and they need access to good child care programs. We would expect that any early childhood education programs would be quality programs taught by qualified instructors and that funding would reflect research findings that for those young children who would most benefit from early childhood education, full day, every-day programs are best.

The federation also feels that the introduction of such programs would require considerable province-wide discussion of matters related to funding and jurisdiction. Although we view all learning as part of a continuum, there is a difference between child care and school programs. Were appropriate child care programs in place, it is unlikely that this would become an issue.

Heritage languages you will find on page 30 of our brief. FWTAO supports the provision by school boards of such programs when requested by a significant number of parents. We believe that school boards should be responsible for staffing, supervision, curriculum and the number and location of the classes. Such programs should be continuing education activities, offered after school or on weekends, which is the

case in most parts of the province. Programs should be taught by additional personnel qualified under the Education Act, not added to the responsibilities of the regular day school teachers.

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FWTAO members have identified specific concerns about the implementation of heritage-language programs during the school day, including the fact that students who are not involved in such programs could not engage in curricular pursuits while their classmates are out of the classroom. Also, heritage-language students might leave the classroom at different times but might prefer to stay for the program in the regular classroom.

FWTAO has frequently commented on the need to examine each ministry initiative in light of its implications for a child's learning opportunities, its effects on current programming and the possibility of its implementation in a busy curriculum. We question whether the teaching of heritage languages should be considered a responsibility of the school. FWTAO believes there are many ways to value a child's heritage and experience without actually teaching the heritage language within the school day. Certainly, we are convinced that such matters should be handled locally and with full consultation among all concerned.

Administrative organization: Research shows that a strong principal is a prerequisite for an effective school. We are firmly convinced that the principal should be both a school manager and an educational leader. The principal of an elementary school must have practical classroom experience at all divisions and be knowledgeable about child development and how young children learn. Ideally, schools would have curriculum leaders at each division.

We believe it is vital that the composition of all staff reflect the makeup of the local community. Special measures are necessary to ensure an appropriate racial, multicultural and gender mix. We stress again that all children need role models. Among other essential measures, female students must have opportunities to view women as equally capable of holding positions of responsibility.

In conclusion, FWTAO is adamant that our education system must continue to recognize all children as persons in their own right. To do this, we cannot separate the content of learning from the process of learning, any more than it is possible to learn about democracy in an autocratic system.

FWTAO believes that the Ministry of Education should continue to set the goals and the general guidelines for programs. The boards should determine the program content, knowledge and skills to be taught and individual teachers should decide which techniques and strategies to use. This in no way detracts from the importance of the home-school relationship, nor from the contribution of involved and interested parents to their children's school success.

FWTAO does not believe that our education system is floundering. There will always be room for improvement and changes will always have to be made. Society is not static and neither is the school system. Schools must continue to adapt to the changing needs of the society and individuals they serve.

In closing, we repeat the cautions expressed in our presentation at the select committee hearings earlier, and those are found on page 24.

The Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario appreciates this chance to contribute to the select committee's most important discussions. We would welcome further opportunity to become involved before the committee's decisions become final.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Helen.

Mr. Reyecraft: I thank the federation for the presentation and the report. It was certainly a very thoughtful one and a very extensive one. You have really covered the waterfront on educational issues and gone beyond the ones that are currently within the scope for this committee.

I wanted to ask you about your stated policy on retention. I certainly support your position on that. I think there is ample evidence available now that students do not profit by repeating grades. In fact, we have a presentation being made before us this afternoon addressing that very specific issue and nothing else.

You have said that neither remediation nor retention is the solution to the problem. I have read what you have said about activity-based programs, integrated curriculum and emphasis on skill development, but it seems to me if we avoid retention and we do not rely on remediation, at the time the student comes in contact with the credit system, we will have, as we do now, young people who are unable to successfully complete those credit courses.

It is my view that there has to be a way to address that problem. I think in rejecting both remediation and retention, we are simply avoiding the problem, not addressing it. I am

interested in your reaction to that and particularly some expansion on why you reject remediation.

Mrs. Penfold: Thank you for helping me. I will clarify that. We are not opposed to remediation. Remediation can be a useful part of a particular individual's schooling. What we are saying is that it is better to set up programs in the first place that allow for children to progress through a certain division at their own individual rate with their own individual learning style, so that retention and remediation are not always necessary.

Mr. Reyecraft: But that is not going to eliminate those students leaving grade 8, entering grade 9 and being unable and unprepared to successfully cope with credit courses. Are we not just postponing the failure until they enter the secondary panel?

Ms. Dickson: I think we are saying that neither remediation nor retention solely is the answer. We are saying that remediation on its own is not the answer and nor is retention on its own, but a combination, depending on the needs of the individual student. In some cases, remediation is going to work very successfully and will then prepare the student for grade 9 and the kinds of testing that goes on in the credit system.

Mr. Reyecraft: Are you suggesting then that within the intermediate division and the elementary panel, we set up some objectives that should be achieved within those two years, or perhaps before students leave grade 8, not necessarily within two years? Is that what is being suggested?

Ms. Westcott: If I might make a couple of comments, the intermediate division is really grades 7 to 10; if we are talking about the intermediate division as currently defined, that is grades 7 to 10. But what we are proposing is to take a look at divisions, take a look at the primary division and take a look at the junior division, set the goals for what should be achieved at the end of that division, rather than expecting that every individual child shall achieve exactly this much in 10 months. Children do learn differently; they do learn at different rates. We are saying, "Your achievement should be by the end of division rather than by the end of each year."

One other point that we must always remember as educators too is that we are now encouraging, and I believe it is not just teachers—certainly the Ministry of Education and all educators are encouraging all youngsters to proceed as far as possible in our school system.

We have many youngsters going through school and indeed into secondary schools who a few years ago were not going into secondary education. They were dropping out even earlier than secondary education. We must remember that we have to make adjustments for those individual students as well. It is a matter of how we look at the appropriate programs for those students and what are the expectations for those individual students for progressing through the system.

Mr. Reycraft: Let me go back to your thesis of objectives by division then. Does that mean that you suggest we should abandon the credit system in grades 9 and 10?

Ms. Westcott: We tend not to get involved in the debate about the credit system too much since we are representing elementary teachers. We hesitate to get into that kind of discussion with you too much at this point. We tend to prefer to speak to the issues as they relate to the elementary students.

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Mr. Reycraft: Then that takes me back to my previous question, where I asked about grades 7 and 8. If you are going to deal just with the intermediate division within the elementary panel, then are you suggesting that you would set up objectives for those two years, students would have to meet those objectives before leaving grade 8 and, in some cases, it might take three years for a student to meet those objectives?

Mrs. Penfold: I do not think we would suggest that a student should have to remain in grades 7 and 8 for three years, for that period of time. I think that just as children need to develop in the early years at certain rates, the same thing happens when they are age 12, for example. There will have to be programs available for them in secondary school to meet their individual needs, just as there were in elementary school.

Mr. Reycraft: Does that not suggest a complete overhaul or abandonment of the credit system? If you are talking about programs to meet their needs by division, that is completely contrary to what the credit system provides.

Mrs. Penfold: I personally do not think that, no. I think that the credit system allows for students in the secondary schools to be able to progress. Maybe they are doing very well in one particular aspect of their lives and not so well in another. They do not need to be held back; they are able to move through their courses. I think it is just the opposite myself.

Mr. Reycraft: Is it your opinion that the resources available to provide remediation in

grades 7 and 8, perhaps all through the elementary panel, are adequate to provide remediation?

Mrs. Penfold: The ability to provide remediation depends a great deal on the resources available at a particular local school board. In some areas, there is a great deal that needs to be done to provide more resources for remediation. I think we have addressed that in our brief.

Mr. Reycraft: Thank you.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I appreciate your brief, as I did the brief that you presented to us earlier this year. It was of equal interest and quality. Mr. Reycraft has covered the area that I wanted to talk to you about, but I must confess that I am still a little bit confused. Not being an educator, I do not necessarily know all of the differences between the terms that you are using. When you talk about goals by division and not prohibiting any student from being promoted until he gets to the end of the division, is that the proper understanding? Instead of looking at grade-by-grade objectives, would we be looking at division-by-division objectives? What happens to a student at the end of the division if he is significantly behind the other students?

Ms. Westcott: What we are saying is that some students would take longer to get to the end of the division than others.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Right, I understand that.

Ms. Westcott: Granted, the way that we have our system now divided into grades does create a dilemma for us, because then how do we define exactly? What we suggest is that, within each division, we would establish what the skills should be that the child should be learning during that division.

We are saying if the division is something that we would normally say would be a three-grade division, some students would take longer than three years to get those skills. Some would achieve those skills in three years. Others might not; they might take longer. Some indeed might take less than three years to gain those skills. Rather than establishing that you must be so much exactly within the 10 months, if you spread it through the division, it would be easier, we believe, for parents to understand as well that a child may move through that division, rather than it looking as if the child is automatically promoted into the next grade even though the child has not achieved all of those skill levels.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: What would be the practical difference for a student as he or she progressed through the primary division? Would it not be, at the end of the year, the same type of thing?

Would we be flexible enough that a student could move from grade 1 to grade 2 in, say, November of the second year, instead of having to look at June and September? The system is not that flexible now.

Ms. Westcott: We recognize that it would require some greater flexibility than what we have now with the grade systems, but we also recognize that currently, even though we have the grades, the way that individual teachers work with the children in the classroom, they do allow the children to be moving through skill development at different speeds, if you will, because some children learn more quickly in some areas than others.

Yes, it would require greater flexibility because we all have the expectation that come June every year, something is going to happen because we have grades. So it does require some discussion among all of us, as educators, about what our expectations are and whether our expectations are really the best for those we are trying to work with, the children. Are we not creating false hopes for them or putting their learning into boxes that we really should not be putting it into?

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Obviously, the major problem with not proceeding from grade to grade is the failure, the feelings, the family expectations and all the rest of it. I remember looking at some report cards a few years ago from probably my nephew or somebody else, in the line that carried out in the primary division so that it was grade 1, but it might actually have been partly into grade 2.

So we already follow this philosophy to some degree, but because we still have the grades it does not go the next step. Am I right? To really follow that philosophy, we would have to eliminate the grades.

Ms. Dickson: I would like to comment on that. The grades are a very arbitrary structure that are based on a student's age. With that is the expectation that students develop at similar rates and achieve certain levels at the same time.

However, we know that that is not the case. Some students develop very quickly for a period of time and then they reach a plateau where they consolidate what they have learned. That rate is not the same for all students, so within the division, if there were the flexibility that divisions would allow, some students could in fact move very quickly through the first part of the program and then could consolidate at a different time from other students who might be

moving more slowly at the beginning and then moving more quickly later on.

With that flexibility, it would remove some of the stigma that goes with having to repeat a grade. I suppose at the same time it would also allow more flexibility for students who are moving fairly quickly. People would not automatically assume at the end of every year—they would not measure how the student has done for this particular year, but rather for the end of the division.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I still am confused about what the consequences would be. If you set up outcome objectives, what are the consequences of not achieving those objectives? I do not like to see a student fail or repeat, but there are also obviously consequences for the system if there is not some assistance to properly achieve. But what happens when we do not reach our outcome objectives?

Ms. Westcott: Let me try once more. Right now, what happens if a child reaches the end of grade 3 and has not achieved successfully to that point is that the only option we have is to suggest the child should be retained in grade 3. In fact, what may have been happening is that all the way through grades 1, 2 and 3, even maybe from the beginning of junior kindergarten—maybe it was at the junior kindergarten or kindergarten level—the child was a little slower at grasping some of the skills. So the child has perhaps been moved along; in name has been moved along—let me put it that way. But really what the child has been doing is progressing through a series of skills.

We would not have, "You must pass grade 1, you must pass grade 2, you must pass grade 3." Now it is pass grade 1, pass grade 2, fail grade 3, to keep four years. If it were by division, the child would have those four years but would not have suffered the emotional stress, for one example, of having to fail. Rather, the child would have been moving through at the child's own rate and would have taken the four years that now the child takes by having to face failure and move into a class with younger students and that emotional situation; whereas in a proposal such as ours our hope would be the child would not face that kind of peer pressure, that kind of stress with relating to children of a different age, because the child would be working through with children at the same school level all the way through.

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Mr. D. S. Cooke: But we will only really achieve that if we eliminate the label of the

various grades. You are still going to have the emotional trauma if you still attach grades.

Ms. Westcott: That is perhaps true, yes.

Mr. Keyes: Without a great trauma to have to leave behind the peer group.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Yes, but if a student takes until September or October to finish the first one third of the junior division, there would not now be the flexibility of moving into grade 2 or whatever you want to call it.

Ms. Westcott: Now what happens is the child moves into grade 2 but completes the grade 1 program at the beginning of the grade 2 year. That is what happens now. The child is officially in grade 2 but repeats the grade 1 program at the beginning of the grade 2 year. It is happening; it is just that we are making it more difficult.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I want to agree with your comments early in your brief about grades 7 and 8 and concerns about setting up senior public schools or separating out grades 7 and 8. In our area, we finally got rid of our last senior public school, which was set up originally not for any educational purposes but because of rapid growth in enrolment in a new high school that was built and a vacant building and therefore everyone thought it was a good idea to have a senior elementary school. It was just an absolute disaster in terms of putting together all sorts of students who were going through difficult times in their life and putting them all under one roof.

I agree with those comments, although there have been some groups come before the committee advocating the establishment of grades 7 to 10 as separate divisions and perhaps separate buildings as well.

Mrs. Penfold: We certainly do believe that students at the grade 7 and 8 level have a lot more in common in their social and academic development with the elementary school and we have cited in the past some studies that have been done about the development of students at that age level, particularly, as you say, their social development. It is very important at that age level. We feel that putting them into the more impersonal atmosphere of the secondary school could be harmful.

Ms. Dickson: Young adolescents are going through such a metamorphosis at that time that it is not the time also to move them into a brand new situation. They need at least the security of the elementary school that they are more familiar with.

Mr. Chairman: Just before we go on to Mrs. O'Neill, I quite agree with you in your concept of

moving grade 6 into the intermediate division instead of leaving it at the junior, for some of the reasons you have just stated. The children are at a very vulnerable age when they are going into grade 7 and for them to have to leave the old system and go into a new school at that particular stage is very disruptive.

However, the problem in areas such as Toronto is that there is a very rigid hierarchy set up where your school ends at grade 6, then you have an intermediate school for grades 7 and 8 and then you go to your secondary school. The children have two moves in a two-year period. I am wondering how do you try to incorporate that into a system where the schools are set up specifically in a different direction.

One child right now is going to Brown School. They are at capacity to the end of grade 6. They go to Hodgson School, which is at capacity for grades 7 and 8. You cannot put a grade 6 into that system. You would basically have to change the whole system.

Any comments on that situation?

Ms. Dickson: That is one of our main concerns. The ministry has certain philosophies and policies and some boards do not create a situation that makes it easy to support some of those philosophies. For example, the ministry is promoting a more integrated program at the intermediate level. Where there are a lot of subjects on rotary, that very difficult. There are incongruities there. That is another example. Personally, I think that boards the size of boards in the Metro area have more flexibility to organize in a way that really is more congruent with the philosophies that the ministry is purporting. It is more difficult in some small schools in small boards in northwestern Ontario, for example, really to support administratively the programs as the ministry is proposing that they be carried out.

Madam Chairman: In some of the smaller boards, you have the situation where you just have an elementary school up to the end of grade 8 and then you have your secondary school; so you can switch around grade 6 from junior division to intermediate with very little dislocation. I think the problem is in areas such as Metro, where they may have a different setup. Anyway, I am sorry. I did not mean to dominate the time.

Mrs. O'Neill: If I may go to page 21 of your document, I have heard a lot of complaints about identification and placement review committees over the years, but I really had not heard this one about teachers not participating in the IPRC. You

are talking about the individual classroom teacher who would be both the teacher who would have the child in the classroom as well as a specialized classroom teacher to whom the child might be going. Is this the kind of teacher status you are referring to here?

Mrs. Penfold: Yes, it is.

Mrs. O'Neill: Is this a common problem? If it is, I really feel it is something I am very glad you highlighted.

Mrs. Penfold: Yes. We are aware of areas where the classroom teacher is not able to attend the IPRCs because they are called during the day and there is not a supply teacher available. With students being integrated into the classroom to increasingly higher degrees, we feel the classroom teacher should be at those IPRCs and there needs to be a supply teacher available so that the teacher can attend.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. I thought they were. I thought that was just a given. There are also internal arrangements regarding supplying that could be made.

Mrs. Penfold: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: But you are saying in some cases that does not even happen?

Mrs. Penfold: That is correct.

Madam Chairman: Can Mr. Reycraft have a brief supplementary in that regard?

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay.

Mr. Reycraft: Are your teachers and schools getting complaints from parents about IPRCs being held in the daytime as well, because it is difficult for working parents to get to them?

Ms. Westcott: My recollection is that many of the teachers are reporting that in some instances it is preferable for the parents to be able to have them during the schoolday because the parents are working shift work, and this is one of the difficulties. In order to ensure that the parents are there, the timing of the IPRC needs to be adjusted as well. Sometimes the schoolday is more appropriate for the parents; sometimes it is not, and that is when they are held after school or in the evenings. Again, it varies from school board jurisdiction to school board jurisdiction because their procedures are somewhat different from board to board.

Mr. Reycraft: Thank you.

Mrs. O'Neill: My second question is on folio 30. This is a very delicate area—the area the public seems to have jumped on the bandwagon with—that is, the child care program that is entering into the school system. You are suggesting that this would require considerable province-wide discussion, certainly about funding and jurisdiction.

I am sure you are aware of the question-and-answer program that is out there right now and the interministerial committee. I think you are represented on the interministerial committee or certainly some members of teachers' federations are. I think we are at the moment going in the direction to which you speak, that there is a distinct division here. I would request that you continue to have your input into that at whatever level possible at the regional offices, at the ministry itself and through the interministerial committee because I think it is an area that could run away. We could get off the rails on it if we do not do it right the first time.

As you know, this is a period of consultation and this is actually the first September that these sites have opened. There are a lot of discussion points left. Please continue to be as specific as possible, especially as you mentioned, you are most interested in the elementary school. Although this program is going into the secondary school, there are many more elementary schools in this province than there are secondary schools. I just ask you to be as definitive as possible regarding what you see as little avenues we should either go down or avoid.

Madam Chairman: We will have a final question from Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Mahoney: I will pass in the interest of time. Most of my questions have been covered.

Madam Chairman: I would, once again, like to thank the federation for coming before us and for sharing its wisdom and many of the ideas that it has put forward today.

Ms. Penfold: We have brought a couple of copies of recent briefs which we have prepared related to topics under discussion by the select committee and we would be happy to leave them with you and provide additional copies, if you request them.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. We appreciate that.

The committee adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:05 p.m. in room 151.

The Vice-Chairman: Our first presentation this afternoon is from the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario. I see we have the president, Bob Slack, with us again. I invite you to proceed with your presentation.

Mr. Keyes: Please sit.

Mr. Slack: Thank you very much.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: We have to stand only when the chairman is in charge—chairperson.

Mr. Keyes: Chair, period.

CATHOLIC PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL OF ONTARIO

Mr. Slack: First of all, I would like to introduce the other members who are present with me today. On my immediate left is Bill O'Grady, principal of St. Mark school in Mississauga, with the Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic Separate School Board. On my far left is Jim Shea, principal of Immaculata high school in Ottawa. Jim has also had the opportunity of being one of the first in the province to share facilities with a public school board. On my immediate right is Dr. Ab Dukacz, the executive secretariat member from the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, who is assigned to be the liaison with our group.

We welcome this opportunity to present our views to your committee. We applaud the ministry for its ongoing dialogue with the teachers across this province. The Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario represents both elementary and secondary, male and female.

Our organization is five years old. Some of our objectives are the following: (1) to develop a greater understanding among parents, teachers and students; (2) to secure for teachers a leading role in education; (3) to co-operate with other teacher organizations in improving the standards of education in our province; (4) to improve the status of the teaching profession in Ontario, and (5) to strive for the attainment of full-time principals in all schools across Ontario. Our organization has already submitted a brief to the provincial government with regard to full-time principals in all schools.

Our organization is playing a leading role in the organization of the 1989 conference for principals in Canada. This will be the largest conference of its kind in Canadian history. Also,

this conference will be held here in Toronto in the spring.

I am going to take the liberty of reading from the brief. If you would like to ask questions at any time, please feel free to interrupt.

The Vice-Chairman: The normal custom followed by the committee is that groups make their presentation and then we proceed to questions afterwards.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Otherwise, they would never finish their presentations.

The Vice-Chairman: We have an hour scheduled for your group. We would appreciate it if you could leave as much of that time available for questioning as possible.

Mr. Slack: All right. Then I will just quickly go through the brief.

The Vice-Chairman: Please do.

Mr. Slack: On the first page, we will start with the streaming. The council's membership, unlike most of the anglophone principals' and vice-principals' groups in the province, represents in-school administrators, as I have said, in both panels. In each, we have looked at streaming, and we would like to offer our suggestions for your consideration.

With regard to the elementary schools, we are suggesting that streaming may remain at the status quo. As you are no doubt aware, our classrooms, especially in grades 1 to 6, reflect the impact of almost two decades during which the philosophical stances and research findings which were most influential promulgated the view that children are better served if they are grouped for instruction. Typically, a teacher divides a class of 30 to 40 children into a manageable number of subgroups. In most classes, such an organization is manifested in three groups.

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It is also the case that in most classrooms this grouping frequently is based on the teacher's perception of the children's ability as ascertained by a range of formal and informal appraisals. This homogeneous grouping by ability is most likely to obtain in the core subject areas, such as mathematics and reading. Other subjects, such as environmental studies or art, are seen by many teachers as an opportunity to organize their pupils to other criteria, such as by pupil interests, by learning styles in such a way as to assure

heterogeneous ability groups, by exploiting already existing friendships in the class, by deliberately placing children who need special kinds of support with others who can provide such supports or even by randomly assigning membership in groups.

That is the part I would like to highlight in this part on the elementary school. We, as a council, are recommending that teachers should be made aware of the current research on grouping and freed to choose whole-group instruction or small-group instruction, as indicated by the classroom situation.

When we get into large elementary schools—and in this area of the presentation we are talking about schools where there may be two or more classes at the same grade level—streaming can be done in various ways within these schools. Also, one particular area we looked at and discussed was that of sex and birth date in the streaming process. Our council is recommending that summary research be carried out into the impact of sex and birth date into school achievement and problems in the school setting.

With regard to streaming in the secondary schools, we are recommending that the current three-level streaming practised in high schools be abandoned, at least in the first high school year, and replaced by courses designed to meet the needs and demands of a cross-section of pupils in each class. Further to that, in some instances, especially in the Catholic school systems, a number of our schools operate grades 7 to 12 OAC. In those schools, it is much easier to go into a three-level streaming process per se at the grade 9 level, but schools starting at grade 9, where the teachers must get to know all of their new pupils, may encounter difficulties in getting them into the proper course selection.

We also recommend that secondary school teachers be provided with in-service programs in varied instructional methods and encouraged to employ small-group instruction and use varying criteria for the establishment of ad hoc groups through the course of the year. This may sound quite foreign to a number of secondary school teachers. Elementary school teachers have been in-serviced in this type of instruction for a great number of years.

We also recommend that the trends towards designating specialized schools and the effects and implications of such directions in secondary education be studied.

With regard to promotion policies and practices, we are recommending that more frequent assessment be made in each program and that the

results be used by teachers to make the implied appropriate amendments in program pedagogy and grouping for instruction throughout the school year. Such a proposal also provides support for the view that a credit program be composed of a number of modules, that the completion of each be noted appropriately and that no specific time be proposed by the ministry for the completion of these for credit purposes.

We also recommend that general-level programs be designed with a view that their graduates will be moving directly to the workplace, whereas those in the advanced level would be going into a university or college setting.

We must make certain that a shared understanding be achieved between the educational community and those outside it of the differences among three levels of courses offered in high school, both in terms of who and what proportion of incoming pupils should choose which level and of what skills and characteristics graduates of these programs can be expected to have.

It also seems desirable that programs and procedures be developed to convince pupils who are considering leaving school that they will be welcome to return and to establish and publicize mechanisms which will facilitate such a return.

Semestering is a topic which is varied throughout the province. There are many different modes employed at the present time. We are convinced that in-service programs should be developed to provide secondary school teachers with a greater repertoire of methodologies, especially those which rely less on the lecture method and which lend themselves more profitably to the longer class periods implied in semestered scheduling. That one ties in with the previous one on in-service training for secondary teachers.

We also believe that research into the benefits and liabilities of semestered scheduling should be encouraged. We recommend that research be carried out to ascertain how those problems for transferring pupils, which are tied to semestering being optional, can be ameliorated. With regard to OSIS, we strongly recommend that OSIS be revised to provide for religious education courses for credit. By that, we mean each grade level—grade 9 to grade 12 OAC.

We recommend that ministry guidelines for continuing education programs in which day students are permitted to enrol be written so that the curriculum, number of program hours, assignments and standards are similar to those of programs during the regular school day.

Again, I would like to say that we are grateful to the members of this committee and to the

members of the Legislative Assembly for allowing us the opportunity to come and present to you and offer our recommendations. We look forward to receiving the final recommendations of this committee.

The Vice-Chairman: We have a couple of members who have indicated they want to ask questions. Mr. Johnston, Mr. Mahoney and Mrs. O'Neill.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: This is just the beginning of a long list, I am sure. Welcome to the committee. It is always good hearing from the Catholic system principals. You provide a very different perspective to what we have been getting from some parts of the educational professional network, if I could put it that way, at this time.

One of the major differences seems to be around streaming. Coming from the Catholic system, generally we are getting some—not to categorize them as negative— notions about streaming or limitations of streaming being an emphasis, whereas from the many other parts of the education system at the moment we are getting fairly positive statements about retaining streaming as it is and that kind of thing.

I wonder if you can give us any idea of why it is that that is the case. Why are we not hearing from your system that there should be more basic-level schools and that kind of thing? Is it because your system has not had, up to this point, large numbers of students in the basic levels, that it has been more academically oriented than the other system until completion, or is it a philosophical difference of opinion?

Dr. Dukacz: I think there is no question that in a lot of ways we are naïve. Maybe that helps. We know many of our teachers are struggling with what are apparently the new students, the special education kids who have not been there before in the private sector. It makes sense to us that if you can say for our really special children, our exceptional children in this province, as we have with the legislation passed under Bill 82 a number of years ago, that they should be mainstreamed as much as possible, then it makes an awful lot of sense to say the same kind of rules can apply to children who are closer to the mainstream.

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We are also aware, when we look at the high schools, despite what OSIS says and what we are told that you can move back and forth, those membranes are really quite impermeable. Once

they tell you in grade 9 who you are, you are defined.

Mr. Slack: I think, too, it is probably part of our philosophy where we feel we can educate a child, no matter at what level, and we are trying to make our schools, and now it is into the high schools, accommodate children of all levels.

Mr. Shea: I would like to reinforce what Mr. Slack said in the sense that the environment is pretty important to us. We would like to operate on the premise that all of the students who have a right to attend our schools would have a reasonable opportunity of being successful within that school and of completing within the school as opposed to being channelled into specialty schools.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I will just take it back a step then, because I have never seen figures on those but only anecdotal information as Catholic educators have been coming before us for the last few years. Are there many schools in the Catholic system, secondary level or elementary as far as that goes for this one, that have withdrawal of students with special needs as a major thrust rather than dealing with them in the mainstream in the class? Do we know what the range is there? If you look at the public system, the range of how you deal with kids with special needs is enormous from everybody being withdrawn in some systems to a lot of mainstreaming being done in other school board areas. Is there that kind of variation around the province or are you much more homogeneous in the way you deal with that matter?

Mr. Slack: I would say we are the same. Speaking from personal experience of schools within our own system, it is set up around a resource centre within the school and the pupils who have been identified work from that centre and then are mainstreamed into regular classes, getting support help within the resource centre area.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other matter I want to ask you about is semestering. I think we have heard from the ministry that 75 per cent of the schools in secondary schools, I presume in Ontario, are semestered. Does that percentage reflect what is happening in the Catholic system as well or is there a larger percentage within the public system that have semestering?

Mr. Slack: It would be about the same. Schools are coming more on line for semestering all the time.

Mr. Jackson: May I have a supplementary on that?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Sure.

Mr. Jackson: It is my understanding regarding the 70 per cent statistic that a school could be one-third semestered and two-thirds non-semestered, but that it is included in the statistics to get it up to the 70 per cent or 75 per cent. Are you seeing a trend that moves you towards both programs? Do you have very few of those? Do you have lots of them? Are you moving from a nonsemestered traditional approach to semester without doing the combination?

Mr. Shea: I think in the experiences I have had I have seen semestering being introduced at the senior secondary level. Many of the schools that are semestered would have nonsemestering at the grade 9 and grade 10 levels, which creates an organizational problem, I suppose, for students who wish to reach ahead or what not and certainly from the point of view of staffing; but any of the semestered schools that have been identified to me as semestered schools have not been entirely semestered in the sense that it was grades 11 and 12 OACs that had been semestered and grades 9 and 10 were not semestered.

Mr. Jackson: For further clarification, what you are saying is that 70 per cent of your schools are not totally semestered. That is what I just heard you say. They have a component of semestering.

Mr. Shea: I cannot accept responsibility for the 70 per cent comment and I am not in a position either to state that is an accurate statistic or not. In my experience, I have found that those that are semestered are at the senior level.

Mr. Jackson: That means it is a combination?

Mr. Shea: Perhaps, yes.

Mr. Slack: In my experience, though, it is grades 9 to 12 OAC, in the schools with which I am more familiar, fully semestered.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The point you are raising, and it has been raised with us in the past couple of days, is that it is not a bad idea to have partial semestering and partial regular time-tabling of classes. You are just saying it is a computer problem to work it out. What you are suggesting is that with the credit system under OSIS, it actually causes other kinds of problems if you divide senior school, junior school and high school, because anybody who wants to fast-track it may find that is not easy to schedule.

Mr. Shea: That is correct. They are locked into one model.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is a matter we have not heard. I had one other matter. I think the

people who should like your report most would be OISE because of all the research you are asking to be done and I am sure they will be pleased to—

Mr. Jackson: Which is appropriate, incidentally; most appropriate.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes. I would suggest that the areas you have targeted for research are all very useful.

I have one last question about streaming. You talk about at least abandoning it in the first year of high school, at grade 9. Other people have been talking about getting rid of it in one form or another in grades 9 and 10. I think you can read Radwanski to basically say that and I think we have had a couple of deputants make the same kind of suggestion, that there should be changes in the organizational structure for grades 9 and 10. Why did you choose at least the first year rather than, say, grades 9 or 10?

Mr. Slack: It was an arbitrary grade level, until the teachers within that school would get to know the pupils with whom they are working.

Mr. O'Grady: I think part of the reason too is that we see there is such a big difference between elementary schools and high school. I think in grades 7 and 8 it is totally different. It is different enough for a child at 12 or 13 years old to be changing a building and a whole new thing. We thought they should kind of have a year to get their feet wet.

I know my own sons went through the same thing at high school. They found the first year was such a traumatic experience being with 10 or 12 teachers, huge hallways and thousands of kids as opposed to one or two teachers. We thought the whole first year is perhaps not really an accurate reflection of their academic abilities. If we gave them a year to adjust, we may end up streaming differently or do something different.

Mr. Shea: Because we do have offerings at the three levels in grade 9, I have found that students sometimes want to naturally stream themselves into an easier level. I think it would be pretty important that we all maintain a standard which we would expect all students to work towards and let that natural streaming take place. Towards the end of the first semester, the first report card, I find they want to, naturally, take the easier way out. I think if there were a standard for all students in grade 9, we might more appropriately deal with those within the particular class.

Mr. Slack: From my own personal experience on that, speaking with regard to my own son

going from grade 8 into grade 9, being in a school which has grades 7 to 12 OAC, it was much easier for the teachers than doing course selections. They just said, "He should be there." Luckily for him, they happened to be all advanced and there were no arguments. But they knew him and they were able to say, "This is where he should be."

Mr. Mahoney: I have some questions on that, but before I get to that, maybe I will just go in order of the paper. One of the early recommendations you made with regard to the birth date, I find that particularly interesting. Being the father of my oldest boy, he being a December baby, I understand exactly what you are talking about.

Mr. Jackson: It is a good thing you are the father of your oldest boy.

Mr. Keyes: What about the other ones?

Mr. Mahoney: I am not sure they are mine. I do not think I was home that time, Ken.

Interjections.

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Mr. Mahoney: Gee, these guys. Mr. Chairman, do I have the floor or do I have to put up with this abuse?

Now I forget my question. I will have to think of a new one.

Mr. Jackson: You were back with your son being born at an early age.

Mr. Mahoney: In any event, are you suggesting that changes be made similar to what sports groups do, for example, where they might designate, if you are 12 years old August 1, that you go into a certain category? Are you suggesting that it not be the chronological year the child is born, but rather be moved to a particular point midway to ensure perhaps more balance in the age groupings?

Dr. Dukacz: The main reason this is in here is that we would not like to see it that black and white; saw it off and that is it. You live through periods when some research is more legitimized than other research. We are going through a period now where the image of individual rights is so strong, and probably it should be, that you can no longer say let's just go by birth date. So birth date has become really diminished as a variable, but when you read the research, it is a lot stronger than you can say in public. All we are saying is, give us some tools so we can put it back as a legitimate criterion.

Mr. Mahoney: But is the extension of that if you do not go by birth date, you do not go by age? In other words, you could have someone

categorized based on his ability with a different peer group.

Dr. Dukacz: Yes.

Mr. Mahoney: That is a little different problem than someone who is perhaps the youngest person in the class because he was born on December 28 or something like that.

Dr. Dukacz: Yes. It is also very hard to say in 1988 that for a certain part of their school lives girls are much quicker learners than boys.

Mr. O'Grady: I think also there is the situation where quite often you find that children who are having trouble in school tend to be those who are younger, and when teachers evaluate children, quite often you look at those who are strong in the class and those who are weak. If you look at a kindergarten child, you get some who are nearly five years old and some who are just four. Some are 20 per cent older than others when they start. When you look at that situation—20 per cent older—at that particular age and then the average would be 10 per cent older as the year goes on—it is quite different.

Teachers expect a grade 3 to do grade 3 work, but sometimes some are grade 4 age and some are really a grade 2 age when you look at them at the end of the summer. What we are saying is that perhaps we should look at someone who really is almost 364 days older than someone else and ask, should they be learning the same thing and do they have the same capabilities? In a sense, I guess we are raising that whole problem for you to think about.

Mr. Keyes: I am trying to get back a bit further as to the rationale as to why the research is then to suggest that you do not use an age for entry into, say, kindergarten, as they do now, or grade 1? Is that what the real purpose is, so that your entry to the school system is based on a certain level of maturity as opposed to an age?

Dr. Dukacz: I do not think necessarily entry, but without injecting more cynicism than is due here, for example in the separate school system the admission date is February 28 for some of our boards. What they have found is research says parents tend to keep their kids in the school system where they start. So if we can have January and February kids as opposed to the board of education getting them, then we keep those kids and their fees for ever. That is not a very academic rationale, but it is out there.

Interjections.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is like the day care competition system as well.

Dr. Dukacz: I do not think we would ever advocate making a decision on: "What is the kid's birth date? That is it." We are going through a period where it is almost illegitimate to consider that as a criterion, despite tons of research being done. Even among adult athletes we are finding it. If you are an adult athlete born in January, over your career you will do better than an adult athlete born in December, strangely enough.

Mr. Mahoney: You get an extra year at the top of your game.

On the streaming issue, I see some things that maybe need clarification. You have suggested that streaming into the three levels be abandoned, at least in the first year. You used the term "cross-section." To develop programs for a cross-section of pupils would seem, by its implication, to be contrary to the whole concept of individual attention and meeting individual needs. You are just going to draw up your programs based on almost a sampling of what you think the kids might need rather than looking at the individuals and putting them into specific areas. Could you just elaborate on what you mean by a cross-section? Are you going away from individualization?

Dr. Dukacz: No, on the contrary, we are going exactly in the direction you seem to be indicating is desirable.

Where you accept as your basic premise that these 30 kids who come to me are so-called advanced and these 30 kids are basic, then one program fits all. It is 9:30, I teach the advanced. It is 10:30, I teach the basic. But if you are told you have a cross-section—these are the kids who came and you got them by the luck of the draw or whatever—then you will teach as they do in elementary school. Here are some kids; we will pull them together and treat this math program at sort of a basic level. These kids over here could be working independently but still in the same class.

Mr. Mahoney: A grouping within the class.

Dr. Dukacz: Yes.

Mr. Mahoney: You go on to say—I almost wondered if this was a typo—that the general level programs should be designed with a view that the graduates will be moving directly to work. Did you mean general or did you mean basic?

Dr. Dukacz: General.

Mr. Mahoney: Really? I find that somewhat objectionable. My understanding of streaming is that at the basic level, the kids are basically going to go to work after they graduate; the general is

designed to move towards post-secondary education, probably in applied arts and technology, and the advanced is going to take them to university or to college.

I wonder why you would want to direct general level kids and put in them the philosophy that they are going to go to work as soon as they are done with school rather than encourage them to go to post-secondary.

Mr. Slack: Most of them do go into the workforce. A greater percentage of our population would be in the general level, and there is no way that the community colleges could absorb all the pupils who are graduating from the secondary system.

Mr. Mahoney: From an educational point of view, a parental point of view, would it not make more sense to try to encourage some of the ones in the general, who could, with a little bit of assistance and remediation, probably perform at the advanced level, in that direction rather than push them out the door to the workforce?

Mr. Slack: I believe that is done at the present time. Maybe Mr. Shea can explain more on it.

Mr. Shea: I think we have to differentiate between the advanced level students and the Ontario academic course graduates, because indeed, there are a number of advanced level graduating students who are not graduating as OAC students and who are going and taking up the places within the community colleges. Perhaps they are taking the places that were intentionally designed for general level students, but I think I would have to support the criteria that most general level students do not go towards post-secondary education or training, other than the apprenticeships or whatever. I think, to support our recommendation, that work-orientation skills, career-planning skills and even an element of co-operative education should be an integral part of their programs.

Mr. Mahoney: I guess the statement on its own is a little stark. I find it, to be frank, not a terribly positive statement that I would like to see in any philosophy of education.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We have not asked for anything from the government. Maybe we should be trying to find out just what the percentage is of general level students who go on to post-secondary education.

Mr. Mahoney: I think we were told that at the beginning, but sure.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Was that in the stats? I do not think it was, not that breakdown. We were given overall stats, not for general level. They

were percentages of the entire student body that go on. It was only 15 per cent.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think it is very available.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think we could easily get that pulled, and it would be fascinating to see.

Mr. Mahoney: I have two more quick points, if I might. At the bottom of that same page, you refer to kids who are considering leaving school and you tell them they will be welcomed back and establish mechanisms to facilitate that. Are you not running the risk, bearing in mind that you are dealing with a 16- or 17-year-old person, that he is going to say: "I can leave school. This is a piece of cake. I can always come back. I am going to take a year off and travel or work and pile up some dough and then I can always come back"? There is a lot more to going back to school than just the mechanism of accepting them back in school.

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There is the financial consideration, the whole psyche that, once a kid gets out there and gets working, \$100 in his pocket seems like a lot of dough when you are 17 years old. You realize how quickly it burns a hole. It is not a lot of dough, but it seems like a lot of dough. I would just be concerned that you might encourage more people to leave if you put into place mechanisms that say to them: "It's okay. If you're going to leave, we're going to make it easy for you to come back." I would suggest an awful lot of them will not come back, and maybe more would leave.

Mr. Slack: They are not coming back now, a lot of them.

Mr. Mahoney: But maybe more would leave, because they think it would be easy to come back. That is my point.

Mr. Slack: There are a lot who leave who are not going into the workforce. They just want to leave school and bum around for a year or two and then try to get back into school. It makes it difficult on some of them trying to get back in.

With some of the alternate schools that exist at the present time, it proves very beneficial. Once they have made the decision that they want to come back, these young people who have been out, either not in the workforce or in the workforce, are ready to learn.

Mr. Mahoney: I would agree with that and I guess it is almost akin to a mature student, who always does better, but at what point is he mature? I have no problem with making access to the high schools more available to people who want to return. Your statement seems to indicate,

though, in my interpretation, that when a young person is considering leaving school, we talk to him and say: "Look, if you really do leave, don't worry about it. We'll bring you back. You can get back in in a year or two." I would be really concerned about that sort of psyche going out to them.

The Vice-Chairman: Mr. O'Grady and Mr. Shea have both indicated they want to respond. Then I would like to go to Mr. Jackson for his question, if I could. We will come back to you for another one.

Mr. Mahoney: I have only one more, on the religious aspects, which I can ask after Mr. Jackson. That is fine.

Mr. O'Grady: As part of the elaboration on that point, we were looking at so many people leaving school that we really wondered, after they do leave, for example, what types of mechanisms are in place? Does anybody ever phone them? Does anybody ever follow up and say: "Do you really like your work? Do you want to come back?" We do not think there is enough being done.

In connection with this recommendation of telling them they can come back, I wonder if anybody has really gone out and beat the bushes or done anything to tell these young people, "Do you think you made a mistake? Would you like to come back?" and easing that transition. We would like to see that as the minimum requirement, because they are only 16 and they make mistakes. Quite often, there is a lot of peer pressure when coming back and perhaps they think they have made a mistake. I think we can do a lot more to retrieve these kids who are leaving, because it can be a quick, momentary decision at times.

Mr. Shea: Actually to continue with what Mr. O'Grady was saying, we have to go back to the point where these students have indicated they wish to leave school. I think we, as part of the school community, have a responsibility that if indeed they are going to leave, we have to assist and attempt to provide them with some direction as they leave. Part of that direction should be a process for returning.

It is not as simple as saying, "Clean out your locker, hand in your books, sign a paper and make sure everything is in." I think we have a mandate, if you want, to assist them as they enter the workforce, or at least a life of nonschooling. I think we should commend it for suggesting that indeed there would be a mechanism for them to return.

Mr. Jackson: First of all, let me say how very pleased I am with your brief. It is one of the better ones we have received, albeit we are only into our third day. You have challenged us to look at a couple of issues, which I deeply appreciate, several of which I have already raised with the committee. The one on sex and birth-date assessment and school achievement is something that is a soapbox for me.

I am absolutely delighted that as a principals' organization you have recognized this and put it in the form of a recommendation, because I am aware of the documentation which would indicate that we must be doing something for all the right reasons as opposed to the reasons of competition between systems or cheap day care or allowing parents to unload their children to a baby-sitting service one year earlier. Those are rationales that have no place—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Those are the negative ones.

Mr. Jackson: Those are the negative ones, yes. Both Mr. Johnston and I are fighting to get our children into—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: This is what is known as the Amy amendment.

Mr. Jackson: The Amy Elizabeth Jackson amendment. However, my daughter is doing fine, thank you.

At the outset your first comment intrigued me. I really have to pursue it even though it is out of context with the agenda. You said full-time principals in all our schools. A short answer. Why?

Mr. Slack: To develop a complete leadership role, to act in curriculum planning, to be available for public relations—public relations is one of the greatest roles that a principal plays—and to get to know the staff and pupils better within the school.

Mr. Jackson: I will not prolong it, but I have a very strong feeling about principals having a tremendous amount of power and authority within school boards and within communities. I had hoped that you would make more reference to teacher evaluation and effectiveness, which I consider one of your strongest roles. I would like to have heard that as perhaps rated even on your original list.

At what point do we get principals to stop talking about small schools and talk about more manageable and effective schools in terms of their size? I know I am wandering a bit here, but that is the part that always aggravates me. I agree we should have a full-time principal in a school

of 400 or 500-plus students, but I have a hard time justifying a full-time principal in a school with a 125 kids in it.

Have you as an association made the coterminous recommendation that schools should be at least of a minimum size to guarantee a certain access to programs? I realize you are in the separate system, so you are expanding just about everywhere, but the reverse problem is occurring in the public system. You touched a nerve. That is why I had to pursue it.

Dr. Dukacz: This is just off the top of my head, but I think if we had to take a guess, we would be pushing for smaller schools. If you have a lot of schools of 200, you do not have to shut schools of 400 every second year.

Mr. Jackson: I have a problem with that.

Dr. Dukacz: We have also been unable to discern a list of responsibilities that a principal in a small school does not have and that a principal in a big school does have.

Mr. Jackson: I will not get into it, because we are off topic. But you have term appointments, the role of the vice-principal, teacher leadership, the effective use of planning time. There are a hundred things to deal with. I just wanted to pursue that briefly with you. We will come back to this privately perhaps.

I appreciated your touching on a point that Professor Tom Symons talked about. He only spent one sentence on it, about semestering. He said, it is good for the sense of community, and he left it. You built on that concept. If any of us have visited Catholic schools, it is part of the catholicity of making students feel welcome, to feel good about themselves and to feel part of something.

I think probably one of our problems with the way we structure schools is that it is too much of a shock for a student. Although they feel good about themselves with the options that they can choose, they are very lonely at times in a school of 2,000 when their immediate peer group is filled with kids from feeder schools whom they have never met before.

I appreciated your expanding on that. You may wish to comment further on it. I believe the lost-student syndrome is a significant contributor to the early stages of dropouts. It is something educators are not dealing with. I sense that some of your recommendations that deal particularly with more structure in grades 9 and 10 seem to be more of a way of assuring that they have a standard peer group which they do not deviate too far from. Their relationship with teachers is stronger in grades 9 and 10.

You may wish to expand upon that because that was the context in which I received your presentation. I am very delighted that you have crystallized it a little better than the other deputants of the last three days.

Mr. O'Grady: I think part of the response to our grade 9 recommendation is that it is like moving to a new house. Sometimes you move to a new house and it takes almost a year to get your feet wet, to get unpacked. For the first year you might hate the house and say, "Why did we ever move?" By the end of eight or nine months you start to make some roots. You start to meet the neighbours while cutting the grass. After about a year you may think, "This is a terrific neighbourhood."

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What we are thinking is that the same thing can happen with students who go from a small, personalized grade school to what some of them would call a factory, a high school with thousands of kids. We thought that the grade 9 situation is such a year of transition and uncertainty and these are just young kids, not adults, and they cannot really cope with it, so we should give them a year before we decide the rest of their life. It fits in well with the idea of community, with the idea that they like to belong. I think that quite often in grade 10, after you have been a year at high school, perhaps your marks change as well. It would be interesting to do a study on achievement marks in grade 9 as opposed to grade 10.

Mr. Jackson: You made reference to, "Students naturally want to choose a less challenging path." That is a very interesting statement to be making about young people. In your opinion, who is assisting them to make those decisions?

Mr. Shea: I guess I have to accept responsibility for that statement. I find that year in and year out, particularly at the grade 9 level, as students come into school in September, in the first week of mathematics a teacher lays it on or whatever, and the student says, "This is too hard for me." It is compounded. "I want to get better marks and therefore I will go to the general level and get a 75 in mathematics as opposed to sticking it out at the advanced level and maybe getting a 60 or a 65."

Mr. Jackson: For less effort?

Mr. Shea: That is correct.

Mr. Jackson: Okay, then you further clarify that, and I appreciate that. What do you consider to be the solution to that?

Mr. Shea: I think part of the solution would indeed be for the development of a grade 9

program whereby you can have individual learning within a group class setting, whereby the teachers, as we stated earlier, along the lines of what the elementary school teachers are doing, are addressing different rates of learning within a group as opposed to streaming them all within one group and anticipating that the entire group would learn at the same rate. I think we have to get back to the concept that individual learning takes place and can take place within a group.

Dr. Dukacz: One of our resolutions talks about getting some kind of shared image among parents. That is what it comes down to. A lot of times, people are making decisions without knowing what the heck the "So what?" is. It is almost embarrassing, but you talk to teachers who are trying to help their kids through the grade 9 and grade 10 course booklet and they are hard pressed, and they have spent their lives in education. In many cases, it is really hard going to figure out what it means two or three years down the line if the child chooses this. We do not often spell that out perhaps as clearly as we might.

Mr. Reycraft: You have suggested that in September or October grade 9 students ask to move down to a general level course from advanced because they can get better marks with less effort, to quote somebody here. That perhaps is one of the explanations. Is it not possible, though, that they might have just selected a course level that is too difficult for them in the first place, that initially they selected the advanced course because they wanted to stay at the top, due to the status that is attached to that, when really they were not able to deal successfully with those courses?

Mr. Shea: That is certainly possible. I do think, however, that the course selection is a process that very much involves the grade 8 teachers and the guidance counsellors. Usually the recommendations that are made on the option sheet, which is signed by the parents, coincide with the recommendations of the grade 8 teachers. So in many cases, the grade 8 teachers are recommending the advanced levels.

Indeed, you may be correct that perhaps they are in over their heads. However, if they were within a group where the levelling was not differentiated, the teacher would then have to teach to the individual within the group. It could be two-pronged. It could be the student wanting out of the advanced level, but it could also be the teacher saying, "You don't belong at the advanced level, you should be taking something at the general level." This would not happen if

indeed the mandate were to instruct, if you want, all the children assigned to your group.

Mr. Slack: Just following up on your question, another great influence that has not been mentioned here is the social pressures that exist on these young people going into grade 9. If they want to keep their sociability level high and their work level is so high, they want to give up the work level before they give up the social level. I think we have to look at that sociability level and tie it in.

Mr. O'Grady: If I can just respond to that as well, I think we are again talking about almost a moving analogy. You have a child who is moving to a new situation, a new teacher and quite often for the first couple of weeks they get this fear and this anxiety that perhaps they are in the wrong place but we are putting too much pressure on them to make that choice, to try to swim. They feel that they are starting to sink and really they are floating. What we are saying to these kids is they would not have to make this choice if there were not all these variables like, "Am I good enough for this or that?" and on any given day you know what a child of 15 years old is thinking. He fails one test and he gets out. I think it is wrong. I think it is too much pressure.

Mr. Jackson: Last question: I would like to build on a question Mr. Mahoney first touched upon with respect to your recommendation that programs and procedures be developed to convince pupils who are considering school leaving, etc. I wondered if you have, as a principals' association, been monitoring the supervised alternative learning for excused pupils programs. Are you noticing any trends and did you have any more specific recommendations in that area, because they are clearly a group that you can identify early, because these are 13-, 14- and 15-year-old students who are legally still signing off to leave the system as opposed to a 17- or 18-year-old who may say, "I have had some trouble and I would like to come back."

Mr. Shea: I do not think that we have addressed it as a group but I think as opposed to the early school leaving plan, which indeed was just a monitoring of young people as they left school, in my experience it has not been a factor in my particular school. I have to state that indeed we have worked much along the line of the co-operative education model and that appears to have been the answer to alternative at this time and personally within my school we have not explored that possibility.

Mr. Jackson: Perhaps it is too early. I do not wish to bring up the Bill 30 spectre but I know

when I was doing SALEP signatures for 10 years in this province, even though the percentage of Catholic students in my community or board area was 28 per cent, 40 per cent of the SALEP graduates from the public system were Catholic. I do not want to get into that but perhaps it is too early now that you are on full funding and you are receiving the greatest if not the total share of Catholic students that in fact you will start to see that trend emerging.

In the public system in one year I signed 100 13-, 14- and 15-year-olds off on to the market. I could not live with it and we developed in defiance to the provincial legislation a whole series of programs and brokerage with the student, and even though their signature was meaningless we made them sign the agreement. As a condition of leaving they had to go to another school to examine programs and we reduced dramatically the number of early school leavers. That is just to let Mr. Mahoney know there are programs out there if the school board has the political will to go out and leave the 99 for the moment in order to save that one.

Unfortunately, what is wrong is we still, as a province, give the money for that pupil to that school board for two years while that student is gone and I think it is morally indefensible that a school board will collect the money but it will not do the monitoring, the following up, the periodic checking with a student who is out of school at age 14 or 15 in this province. They should be coming, reporting to the school and we can retain them until they are through a variety of difficulties.

Perhaps it is a matter which will surface more significantly but that is one example I wanted to share with you to illustrate Mr. Mahoney's question, because I fully laud your statement and when the social workers are here before us we will be having some focus questions on retention and how we can get community services working more closely with teachers and full-time principals.

Mr. Shea: I think that your conclusion is correct and indeed most, if not all, of the Catholic children after grade 8 went into the public schools and the vocational schools and the specialized schools. I guess that it is one of our greatest challenges if we are indeed going to develop a Catholic environment that we cherish so much that we have to develop strategies that will keep those children within our own schools and that will address their needs. It is correct to state that they are probably at the grade 9 and 10

levels as opposed to at the senior levels within our Catholic high schools at this time.

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Madam Chairman: Thank you. Did any other members of the delegation have comments before we went to Mrs. O'Neill's question?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just that it should be noted that we just heard the first biblical reference by Mr. Jackson. I really sat back in my seat. It really shocked me.

Mr. Jackson: I am sure you will pray for my soul.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: There are some prayers that will never be answered.

Mr. Jackson: Well, I am young and hopeful. I know mine might be answered before yours is.

Madam Chairman: If the peanut gallery is quite through, we will go to Mrs. O'Neill.

Mr. Mahoney: We are going to have to separate them, I think.

Mrs. O'Neill: Many of my questions have been at least touched upon. However, I would like to ask Mr. Slack to comment on the statement on the first page of the brief. Maybe I am not reading it correctly. "The council's membership, unlike most of the anglophone principals' and vice-principals' groups in the province, represents in-school administrators in both the elementary and secondary schools." Is it the elementary and secondary school part that you are highlighting there, because most principals' associations, I presume, are in-school people?

Mr. Keyes: It covers both elementary and secondary.

Mrs. O'Neill: I want Mr. Slack to answer.

Mr. Slack: Our affiliate, the Ontario Teachers' Federation, covers all teachers from kindergarten to 12 OAC, whereas in the public school system there are different federations.

Mrs. O'Neill: Oh, that is what you were highlighting.

Mr. Slack: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. I thought it was the in-school administrative part that you were highlighting. If I may then go to the proposal where you state, "That a credit program be comprised of a number of modules, that the completion of each be noted appropriately, and that no specific time be proposed," are you, then, taking into question the 120-hour requirement?

Dr. Dukacz: Yes. Right now, the way the system operates is we have decided that the way

to determine whether a child is successful is some percentage of work completed satisfactorily within a given period of time. What we are advocating is we hold as the independent variable the amount of work completed. So we would say, okay, when you learn, let's say—for want of a better example—addition of fractions, we will give you a credit for addition of fractions and then you go to something else. If it takes you 100, 80 or 150 hours, we can live with that, but we are never going to say to you, "You get 51 per cent." We are going to say to you, "You are successful."

Mrs. O'Neill: So you are suggesting a real change then.

Dr. Dukacz: Absolutely.

Mrs. O'Neill: Do you see this as leading towards some kind of standardized testing to determine if a person has reached a certain level?

Dr. Dukacz: Not if you are talking about some sort of province-wide testing, but certainly the teacher would say: "When you get eight of these questions right out of 10—or whatever arbitrary number there—then you get your credit. When you complete this work you get your credit."

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. So it could be the same kind of examination now that we have now, but not nearly as closely tied to hours within a classroom.

Dr. Dukacz: Yes.

Mr. Slack: We are back to mastering learning; the Benjamin Bloom theory that was quite in vogue a number of years ago and then it seemed to drop. It is in the Radwanski report. So we are just highlighting that and bringing it back again.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. I think those are all the questions I have after sort of pulling up the rear here.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. I would like to thank the council for appearing before us today. I only heard the last part of your brief and the questions, but it sounded like there were some very stimulating thoughts that came through and some original ideas that have not appeared in some of our other briefs. So I would like to thank you for your contribution to our committee.

Mr. Slack: And, again, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to present, and especially we would like to thank Mr. Jackson. He has given us some topics—teacher evaluation, excellence in the schools, leadership, early school leaving. The ministry will be hearing from us on topics along those lines.

Mr. Jackson: You will get a little support on that.

Mr. Slack: Thank you for the challenge and, again, thank you everyone.

Madam Chairman: I am not sure Mr. Jackson wanted the fact that he was coaching you how to attack the government to come out publicly.

Mr. Jackson: I was coaching how to have a better educational system, and that is what I thought we were all here for.

Madam Chairman: Oh, we are so impressed. Thank you.

Our next group will be the Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Please come forward and take your seats.

Good afternoon, and welcome to our committee. We have allocated a half-hour for your presentation, as well as for questions to be asked, so we hope that you will save some of the time for questions by the members. I know they have a number already. Begin whenever you like, and please start by identifying yourselves for purposes of electronic Hansard.

DUFFERIN-PEEL ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. Hall: Madam Chairman, let me thank you for this opportunity to appear before the select committee. We have with us this afternoon our committee, which has been working with this brief. I would like to introduce to you Anne Clement, a principal in our association who has been seconded to the curriculum department; Sandra Glynn, who is the chair of the English section and also a vice-chair of our board, and Jack Burns, who is the superintendent of curriculum for secondary schools. I am Bob Hall, the chairman of the board, and I just want to say a few opening remarks that might help with this presentation.

First of all, we do not intend to read it. We have a number of recommendations, and our people this afternoon would like to speak to you with regard to the recommendations that we have made here. I would like Anne to begin this, and we will carry on the dialogue then.

Mrs. Clement: I will speak to recommendations 2, 5, and 9 of our brief. They stress our position that the government should direct funds to the improvement of education from the earliest years of schooling, rather than to another administrative restructuring of secondary schools. Specifically, they deal with ways to improve the education of our children through

recognition of the importance of literacy and numeracy as the means of acquiring knowledge in all other subjects. They deal with the importance of identifying benchmarks that will help educators to develop appropriate learning objectives for students, with the provision of improved teacher training at both the pre-service and in-service levels and with the recognition that grade promotion or retention is an educational decision, not a political one.

For too long in education, instructional practice and public expectations have viewed reading and mathematics as isolated subjects rather than as important processes that apply to learning in all areas of study. Thus the emphasis has often been on the development of isolated skills and rote learning. A large percentage of students experiencing difficulty in schools have not seen the connection between the work that they are doing in the subjects of reading and mathematics and learning in other areas of the curriculum. We are pleased that the current generation of ministry education guidelines is helping to deepen our understanding of the significance of literacy and numeracy as enabling tools in all areas of learning.

The development of pedagogically sound benchmarks in literacy and numeracy would facilitate the development of appropriate instructional objectives for each student. It would help to provide students, parents and teachers with more reliable information on the student's progress, on which to base other educational decisions. Further, it would clarify for educators and for the public the expectations for the school system at all levels.

Teachers will require a great deal of support in order to become more skilled at monitoring and evaluating student growth and in using this information to plan and to manage programs for each child. At present, despite their great efforts, school boards lack the financial resources to provide the kind of staff development programs needed to ensure that what goes on in classrooms reflects current understandings about teaching and learning.

In keeping with our view that education must serve individual students, we stress again that decisions around promotion or retention must be made by the primary educators of students, that is, their parents and teachers. There should not be societal pressures to have a certain number of students pass or fail merely to demonstrate to the public how effective schools are.

Mrs. Glynn: Mrs. Clement has talked to you a little bit about the direction in which we think change should take place. I would like to suggest a little again in the way of means and resources that we see as required for that. To that end I will be speaking primarily to recommendations 3, 4, 7 and—I had better put my glasses on—11.

Mrs. Clement touched on the fact that we have to have adequate financial resources, particularly in the primary and junior years, because it is our belief that many of the difficulties that ensue at higher levels occur because students do not acquire the skills at that very early stage of their education that they require in order to take advantage of that which follows.

We are looking primarily, I think, at a much lower pupil-teacher ratio and also at adequate facilities in which that lower PTR can be effective. We need, again, a clear delineation of benchmarks. We need very clear systems of reporting and certainly clarity around the advancement of students within those benchmarks.

In recommendation number 4 we suggest that, at this point in the history of education in this province, what we do not need is another massive organizational structural change. We should try more effectively to program for the needs of each student. We have to, in a more practical way, recognize the developmental differences in students at every level in the continuum, the differences in learning styles, and learn to develop effective procedures for evaluating within those norms.

In number 7 we suggest the development of the role of the student program planner. Again we are looking at a continuous process. Certainly in some areas of special education there is that kind of service now for students. It does not appear to be available in any form of continuity for the average student. We need people who can help with the planning and the monitoring of the needs of each student as he or she progresses through the school system.

We suggest also in number 11 that we should have very strong career planning programs again at all levels. Choices is one example. There is excellent information also from the federal Department of Employment and Immigration. There is a great deal of audio-visual material. I am thinking particularly of the movie *No Way, Not Me*, which has a very, very important message for young girls as they begin to take some charge of their own education and their own plans for the future. This kind of material not only must be available, but I think should be

used. We have to encourage its use by counselors and by student programmers.

One could probably go on for ages suggesting other ways, means and resources to fulfil what we see as some of the changes that are required. I think at this point enough has been said.

Dr. Burns: One thing about coming now: You watch most of your bullets being fired before you get to it.

I am to speak to recommendations 12, 1, 6 and 9. Rather than speak to them specifically, I would like to review what I think are some of the concepts that underline the contents of our paper.

When we started the discussion, we were really looking at trying to clarify our expectations. In the light of that, we found that many of the suggestions and directions that are part of OSIS do not really give teachers and administrators a good sense of what the expectation is and what kind of performance should be expected of students and teachers.

We feel that if we could severely edit some of the materials that have been put out, give people a sense of what the priority is and the relative importance, then I suspect teachers and parents and employers would be more pleased with what they see because I think there would be a better understanding of what we are attempting to do.

The second thing, and there has been reference to it earlier, is the whole business of individualization. There is always a tendency to say that a particular group of students, a grade or a class suffers from a particular problem. The reality is that they do not; individuals do.

Mrs. Glynn has made reference to the idea of someone charged with the specific responsibility of planning and monitoring a students' program. I think if we examine that concept, we can really practise what we have preached so often in the past, that is, the consideration of students as individuals; that during their time in school, there would be an individual specifically charged with ensuring that they are monitored, that somebody is cognizant if there are deficiencies and that some action is taken to remediate them.

The third thing I would like to make reference to is the whole business about time as it relates to schooling, two aspects of it. I think it is time to re-examine the whole definition of a credit. Are students awarded a diploma for time in school, or is it a measure of some defined achievement or the attainment of some benchmark?

The second aspect of time that should be re-examined is the whole business of the schoolday and the length of the school year. I think it is obvious that the school year, especially

with a number of semestered schools, does not jibe with the admission to universities and community colleges.

The other thing that it does not recognize is the natural rhythm of our society. As a teacher and administrator, I would have to tell you that it is very difficult to get students turned on for examinations two weeks after the Christmas break. So I think that if we are looking at time in the school year, we should look at what society's expectations are and how society relates to that time also.

One final statement that we suggested in our recommendations was that we return perhaps to a concept of a model school or a laboratory. I think it is our feeling that quite often we make changes without any real knowledge of what their impact is going to be. We have not really tested them out. What we really need is a test track, somewhere to try these ideas.

We hope that the government will seriously consider that at some point we look at a school or schools where all these ideas, whether they be simple ones of program or major reorganizations in terms of semestering or doing away with the credit system or whatever approach, in fact are tested and thoroughly evaluated before we decide that we are going to make these changes in the school system.

Mr. Hall: There are just another couple of points that I might make with regard to the diploma. This is seen in our recommendation 8. We think that the diploma that students receive should say something more than they have just passed or whatever. We are thinking particularly where that diploma may be presented to a possible employer that he could learn something of the habits and the attitude of the individual when he presents that diploma. We think that would be helpful in telling someone a little bit more of the background of the individual.

Also, in recommendation 10, we are looking for perhaps a little greater flexibility in the selection of subjects and so on; and particularly as a separate school board, that credits be awarded for religious education and so on at all levels.

Those are two additional points. I guess, with that, we have completed our presentation and we will be glad to dialogue with you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Hall. I am also pleased to tell you that you have timed your brief perfectly. You have used up exactly half of your time for your oral presentation, and I commend you on that fine planning. Now, we will go for another 15

minutes of questions from members, starting with Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What is the enrolment this year in your fast-growing board?

Dr Burns: About 55,000.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do you know how many students are taking basic-level courses?

Dr Burns: No. I could not give you a good answer on that.

1520

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If it is something that you can glean easily at some point or other and forward to us, I would be interested in having some idea of what the change has been since completion and the number of students who are entering or needing that kind of basic-level course that perhaps was not provided in other schools before.

Dr Burns: The reason I am hedging is that I have not seen the September 30 report for this year. I would have to say, in my role in regard to program planning with the schools, there definitely has been a reaction and there are certainly complete basic-level programs in most of our high schools in grades 9 and 10. I suspect it is more of an evolution than a revolution and it will grow over the next couple years.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But none of your schools, I presume, at this stage stream in terms of the absolute terms that you have no basic-level schools.

Dr Burns: No. In fact, there is a policy that the trustees have passed that, in fact, we will have no specifically basic-level schools. Maybe I should put a plug in for some more money.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: This is the moment.

Dr Burns: When we are designing and building our new secondary schools, we design and build in facilities for all the members of the community. That includes everything from the trainable retarded and developmentally handicapped students right through the various levels. We are looking at it as a total community.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It fits very much with the things we have been hearing from the Catholic community in general. I really liked your comments on individualization and your depiction of what has gone wrong with the philosophy, which has seemingly been there now for a number of decades to look after the individual's needs yet we ended up with streaming and block allocations.

The principals were just here, and I am not sure if you have seen their report or if you were

here for part of it, and suggested the notion that at least in grade 9, in that transition period, teaching methodologies and groupings similar to those in the elementary panel should be retained. Has the board done any thinking about that?

Dr Burns: As a board, no. There certainly have been discussions about it. Expressing a personal opinion, there is a basic assumption in that kind of an argument that if you put a student in a class of 30 and he stays with them all day, he is going to be happy. That does not necessarily follow. I think it has got a lot more to do with his sense of belonging to the institution and the feeling that somebody cares.

Whether that is the solution—and I suspect that is a very simple part of it—it is a much more involved approach to socializing students into that particular community, and there have to be active steps taken to ensure that the students understand that this process is going on.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What are the alternative steps that can be taken, given that most students go through some level of trauma as they move into grade 9 in terms of the total change from what they have been expecting? Not only have they been the high-status people in their elementary school but also there has been a very different structure where they maybe have two teachers instead of the larger range that they run into in high school. What other kinds of things are there? I think they were talking about it very much as that kind of a tool.

Dr Burns: I think they made reference to the fact too, that now that OSIS has—I will not use the word “forced,” but it certainly has encouraged a lot more semestered schools, it means that the amount of travelling and the amount of movement that students go through in the day is halved; in fact, it is less than that when you look at lunch periods and so on.

The other sort of things that one can do, starting very simply, would be things such as when the students are in grade 8, they visit their local high school and participate for a day in the program in late May or June. We could also advocate that the schools have a permanent home form structure so that when I in grade 8 show up in May or June I get to meet my home form teacher and, not only that, I meet some of the students who will be part of the group in the fall.

The other people who has got to be very much involved with us is the parents. There is a whole series of activities where you want to bring in parents. Most parents are rather concerned when they are called upon to visit a secondary school, because it is big and it is filled with those big

people. Part of the process would be to have parents come to school so they can interpret what is happening to their son or daughter and be made aware of the kinds of services that go on.

I do not think there is a single magic answer, but there is a series of activities that could be put in place to ensure that students feel more comfortable in that transition.

Mrs. Glynn: Could I pick up on that a little? I would love to see somebody develop a list of the kinds of activities that are occurring in a variety of settings in the province to facilitate that. Having taught secondary years ago, we used to have kids come in from the feeder elementary schools for a multiplicity of sporting events and activities. We had real promotional things in grade 9 in order to get them involved in the multiplicity of activities that existed in the secondary school—clubs, organizations, etc.

I imagine there is an incredible number of activities that now take place in isolation around the province that could facilitate that kind of thing, but we just do not have them put together. Maybe part of that leads into the kind of suggestion we had at the end around the model school that would facilitate compiling this kind of information.

Dr Burns: As one final comment on that, when you talk to the students in grade 9, is the so-called sense of alienation a perception of the adult community, that it is having a problem with this, or is it a perception on the part of students? I have to say as a principal, when we tried to get a sense when this became a matter of public concern, we never could really get a very straight answer from the students that they really did experience this sense of isolation that would be solved by putting them into travelling groups.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I guess most of us do it from memory.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We will go to Mr. Mahoney for the final question.

Mr. Mahoney: I have a couple of other questions, but just to pick up on that, I was interested in your statement that kids should be made to feel that they belong to the institution or have a sense of ownership in the institution. I have felt that perhaps that alma mater spirit is not as strong today as it once was. That is my sense from my own kids and their feelings about their schools versus my feelings about my schools. They are very simplistic deductions on my part, but I wonder how you feel about that. Is that true?

Mr. Hall: I think it is because the kids are moving around more, from portable school to

holding school and so on, so they cannot feel the attachment that maybe we could in days gone by, where that school was our school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We could have a motto, "Be true to your portable."

Mrs. Glynn: Do not laugh. It happens.

Mr. Mahoney: I do not know if it is as simple as that. One of my boys has been in one of your schools for three years, and I just do not see that the same sense of pride has developed there that I would have hoped had developed. Anyway, I do not know whether that is necessarily what we are about on this committee.

On the idea of indoctrinating or taking away the scariness, if you think it is scary for a kid to go from grade 8 to grade 9 in school, wait till your parents drop you off at a boarding school. That is a great experience. But it is a frightening thing to go from grade 8 to grade 9.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Do you want a couch?

Mr. Mahoney: There is nobody around here qualified to help me, anyway.

Mr. Jackson: Jim Henderson will be here in a flash.

Mr. Mahoney: He is really qualified to help me.

Is it not up to the individual board, really, to work within the two systems to do that? Why should that be ministry policy? Is that not the community and the board and is it not really up to you guys to make that transition work? Do you agree?

Mrs. Glynn: Yes.

Mr. Mahoney: On the use of the term "benchmarks," which you use in your very first recommendation, we were talking about that earlier. It tends to connote standardized testing. It tends to bring up great fears in the minds of the public, parents, students and educators. Can you maybe just clarify? You are talking about statements of performance, expectations, priorities, goals, that type of thing, all great words, but what exactly are you talking about? When you use the word "benchmarks," what do you really mean?

1530

Dr Burns: When we got into discussing the paper you have in front of you, we decided there were really two aspects to this, and Mrs. Clement made reference to the two aspects. One is this whole business of literacy and numeracy. You used the word "test" and you are right, it has unfortunate things tied to it. In fact, we find a way of determining whether a student has the

prerequisite reading and number skills to be successful in the program. If that is a standardized test, I suppose I would accept that. Whether it has the fear context or not depends on what one does with the test. I think a lot of us here are old enough to have been through ministry exams and so on and can remember very vividly that kind of experience.

I think that if we were developing a program that started to recognize the importance of this, that if the program planner Mrs. Glynn made reference to had a device for determining where a student was, then I think what happened to the student after that would be related to wherever he or she was in terms of these benchmarks. We accept now that there are norms for reading at grade 4 and there are norms for mathematics at grade 7. I think we use these. It depends on whether the student sees them as a threat or something that is part of a normal process of program planning in which we decide what is going to happen next.

When you get into subject areas, very simply, if you want to talk about typing, why do we not issue a typing credit when they can type 20 words a minute without any errors? That is a very simplistic one, but I think we could take that concept further.

Mr. Mahoney: We had a presentation this morning that suggested we more clearly define the school into divisions—the primary, the junior, etc.—and have some form of criteria to move a student from one division to the next, and that until the student is capable of moving, you may have to do remediation and that type of thing. Are you really talking about that?

Dr Burns: That is the very thing I would like to see not happen. What I would like to see is that prior to that change, whatever changes we talk about, whether it is moving from institution to institution or from school to work, some time before that we start to test to ascertain where a student is, that we put programs in place, so that when the transition is made at least we have made an attempt to bring them up to the benchmark and not use the benchmark as a gate that says you either get through or do not get through. What we are saying is that we would like to see the benchmarks used as the determinant for how we plan their program and what the experiences are.

Mr. Mahoney: More of a goal, something to shoot for.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Mahoney, just before you proceed, I think Mrs. Glynn had a comment on the previous question.

Mrs. Glynn: Two, if I could. When we talk about benchmarks, I think we are asking for objectivity in the norms, what exactly that particular program for that particular child is attempting to achieve and not a generalized, "He will move on to his potential," or something like that. But if you are talking in term of literacy about a paragraph—what is a paragraph, roughly how many sentences should it contain, what are the component parts of a topic sentence?—that kind of very objective benchmark norm which, in my experience, we have lost to a great extent in the past number of years, I am not personally nearly as concerned with the idea of standardized testing as I am with the idea of standardized evaluation.

I really feel very strongly that if we are going to achieve what we are trying to achieve in education, we have to spend a great deal more time with teachers in developing a standardized way of evaluating what the students are performing rather than simply testing. In my experience, there is a very big difference, and it takes a great deal of effort, most of which can be done within the school community.

Mr. Mahoney: Okay. Does recommendation 9 really say to shorten the school year, or am I misinterpreting it? If it does, what do you do about the so-called crowded curriculum we already have to deal with?

Dr Burns: No. I think you have received several suggestions about various configurations of the school year. All we are saying is, let's try to rationalize it, as I said, in terms of where these students are going. The other side of it is, let's try to rationalize it in terms of what we are doing in the community at the same time.

Mr. Mahoney: But you are saying it should be a better match with university and college school years, and those school years are historically shorter than secondary and elementary.

Dr Burns: The real concern is the entry point, which is either September or the first week in January. The present definition of a credit in the organization of a school year does not allow secondary school students to complete in January and then enter university or college at that time. They are three weeks out of step.

Mr. Mahoney: One very quick final question, which I was going to ask as the last one. I am sorry. I appreciate your indulgence, Madam Chairman. On the religious education credit issue, are you talking about historic teaching? Are you talking about doctrine for religious education? In either case, is it something you

think should be through both the separate system and the public system if you are going to grant a credit for it?

That is an easy question.

Madam Chairman: Either you are speechless or there is so much to say on the topic you do not know where to begin.

Mr. Mahoney: I know Mrs. Glynn is not speechless.

Mrs. Glynn: Thank you.

Dr Burns: I will say something very briefly. I think theology has a place in a curriculum as an academic study, but I think Mrs. Glynn wants to speak to it further than that.

Mrs. Glynn: I agree with what Dr. Burns has said. In the light of your question, I see no reason there cannot be, if it is so desired, certainly a good, generalized course in theology within a public school system. Admittedly, you are dealing with a multiplicity of differences, but there are, again, objective norms, standards and what have you that could well be taught on a comparative basis.

Within the Catholic system, I think we are looking, probably at every grade level, for the possibility of offering a strong course in theology which would build one year upon the other. Personally, I do not see it as indoctrination, which is really quite different from an objective study. Within what has to be presented to students, I think there is a historical and a very strong social component, because I do not think you can divorce theology as it has evolved, certainly within Christianity, from the historical and the social. I see that kind of a program, and the need for it.

Mr. Mahoney: Thanks very much.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mrs. Glynn. I would like to thank the entire school board for its contribution to our committee today.

Mr. Hall: Thank you very much for hearing us. We hope some of our suggestions will be helpful.

Madam Chairman: I am sure they will be.

Our next delegation will be the Ontario Association of Alternative and Independent Schools. I see from the agenda that there will be a substantial number of people making the presentation. If you would like to start at this end and go right around and join some of our colleagues over here, please do so.

If you need one additional chair, I think there is one behind there. It is just as well that we have an hour for this group, because I think we will take half of that to introduce all the members.

Welcome to our committee. As I mentioned, there is an hour allotted to your presentation and we hope you will leave plenty of time at the end for members' questions. Mr. McBurney, would you like to introduce the members of your group?

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ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF ALTERNATIVE AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Mr. L. McBurney: I would like to introduce our delegation. Starting at my far left is Marty Kravitz, who is the director of the Toronto Learning Centre and the Vista Academy. Marty is a former public secondary school teacher and a continuing voluntary member of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. He is on the legislative and policy committee for the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario and brings considerable experience in that respect.

Next is Agnes Struik. Agnes has been a teacher and a principal over a span of 18 years in independent Christian schools. She worked for a while for the Curriculum Development Centre, which provides curriculum materials for such schools and has worked at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the Co-op Resource Centre. She is currently an educational consultant and a teacher of continuing education courses at the North York Board of Education.

Next is my president, Wendy Priesnitz. Wendy is an ex-public elementary school teacher, the director of the Canadian Association of Home Schoolers and a journalist by profession.

There is myself, Lyle McBurney, and on my right Tony Vanderven. Tony is a teacher at the teachers' college for the Canadian Reformed Church school system. Tony has had a career of 25 years in Christian education and served a great deal of that in Australia. He was there when the Australian schools commission, looking at the whole question of education for Australia, brought support in for independent schools. So he knows what it is to go from nothing to something, in this case from nothing to 70 per cent grant, and he probably could share some of his experiences with you on that.

Next is my friend, a student, Joel McBurney, who will speak to you in a minute. Finally, we have Diana Hughes, also a former public secondary school teacher, a doctoral student at OISE and a co-ordinator of teacher training programs for Waldorf schools in Canada. We have a lot of teachers here today.

At the last meeting we came to, in July, as you recall we read some letters, from parents and a

former student, as it turned out of Marty Kravitz's school, relating how the policy affects their lives, how this discriminatory policy brings hardship into their lives. We illustrated that graphically also by having Olga Anjema and her blind son, Jeremy, here to tell you what it means to go to a private school and be denied tax-paid services for committing that sin.

I thought it would be good today to introduce you to another major stakeholder, one who gets a lot of lipservice at least, and that is the student. Joel currently attends three public secondary schools in the city of Toronto. I am not quite sure what he is going to say, but I wanted him to tell you why he goes to those three schools and what brought about that particular alignment because I think it has a bearing on what we would like to talk about today, that is not only the principle of diversity but the principle of diversity as it affects public education. It may be good to hear from my friend Joel about his particular experience in the Toronto system.

Mr. J. McBurney: I have been attending Malvern Collegiate Institute since grade 9. In my fourth year, which was grade 12, last year, I started to question the whole system and whether it was right for myself, as did many friends. My marks were going down; I will explain why in a minute. I went down to guidance and talked to a counsellor. She recommended the alternative schools within the public school system. I had never heard of these and I thought they sounded like an excellent thing, so I made a few phone calls and got an interview at Subway Academy II, which I liked as soon as I walked in. I enrolled there, then split my courses between Malvern and Subway as Subway did not offer everything.

I will just show you what I found to be the difference between the two and compare them that way. Within the standard public school system I found there were a lot of faults, the main one being a lack of respect and communication between the teachers and students. It seems that the teachers are up here, they dictate everything and the obedient subjects, the students, sit and listen and scribble everything down as quickly as they can.

In my opinion it is a very starchy, archaic, antiquated way of educating. I feel that the teachers at Malvern have as much to learn in the classes as do the students, which should not be the case in a school. I found there was nothing human in a day at Malvern, aside from music and the sports programs offered, in which the students could interrelate openly.

There are many differences. At Malvern, for example, my geography teacher is referred to as Dr. Charles. At Subway, my geography teacher's name is Bob. It seems to me a little ridiculous to have that difference. We are all in there together. We should all be friends.

At Subway there is that mutual respect between students and teachers. They encourage you to interject points when you deem it necessary. You are not hit upon when you say something in class without permission. It is a lot more relaxed. I feel they treat the students a lot more maturely there. The way it is set up is that you are all on the same level. You do not have this hierarchy of teachers and students below.

I found a lot of the staff at Malvern, with the exception of a few teachers, of course, to fit into that categorization. I found the administrative staff to be quite two-faced, actually, when it came to certain issues.

I can honestly say that if it were not for Subway and the alternative system, I would not be in school right now. I think there is no comparison, for myself. A lot of students find the standard public school system offers everything they need. They are quite content there, and that is great, but there are a large number of people who do not fit into that. They question it and lose all faith and respect in it. I think that is where the alternative school system has to come into play so those people have somewhere to go.

Mr. L. McBurney: Thank you, Joel, for an object lesson and revealing a vocabulary that I did not even know you had. I will read from our prepared statement. It is brief, to allow the time that we should have for discussion.

The select committee, I think, is aware that our appearance here today is through the co-operation of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. We were originally scheduled for Monday. With one of our numbers being Jewish and celebrating the Jewish New Year, we, with the help of the committee, went to the OSSTF. They very graciously exchanged appointment times with us, so we want to record our appreciation to them for what we see as being a good educational neighbour in the circumstances.

Also, we thank Lynn Mellor and the staff at the clerk's office not only for helping with that arrangement but for a great deal of the courtesies, both in July and in the current hearings. In every respect, we found that office to be very efficient and very helpful.

The record of proceedings of the committee reflects a wide variety of professional and not so

professional opinion about the issues under consideration in this stage of the hearings—streaming, standardized testing and training students for the world of work, particularly with an emphasis on technology and teacher effectiveness.

This diversity of opinion underscores the presence of many philosophies of education, a point we continue to make before parliament. It also serves as a warning that the committee should avoid trying to propose simple solutions or systems-wide solutions or solutions that draw the government into being an educator rather than the facilitator of education. We said it before. It is a simple formula, but I think it bears a truism, that strictly speaking government has nothing to teach. I will resist the temptation to spell out what the corollary is.

1550

In the July hearing, we said that the fundamental nature of the committee's mandate calls for a careful examination of the role of government in education and we pointed to evidence that confusion appears to exist, at least at the political level, about the responsibility of government towards society's schools. That is seen in such things as a continuing indifference, it would appear, and unjust discrimination, which denies legal recognition and public support to independent schools, or, in other words, the absence of a comprehensive education policy that deals adequately with the educational diversity of the province and the lack of any defined, satisfactory instruction standard for any school in the province.

At that time we presented the committee with the fruits of some of our own work. We offered that not as the definitive answer but as grist for your mill: an education policy statement by which government would commit itself to support responsible diversity in education and promise every child an opportunity in a school chosen by his or her parents that meets acceptable social and educational standards, and also a draft satisfactory instruction definition to be subscribed to by all schools in Ontario.

We have seen in the press since that meeting that the ministry indeed has worked on satisfactory instruction and at one point had it attached to a possible learning materials program, which for the moment has been withdrawn. We also include a list of principles describing what we see to be the respective rights and responsibilities of school and government. For easy reference, we again include these statements as the appendix to this particular statement.

Our coming here today to deal with the administration and organization of education is based on the critical relationship between the philosophy that the government holds towards or for society's schools and the arrangements made that either help or hinder schools in carrying out their particular educational mission. We are trying to distinguish that the government's philosophy for education rather than philosophy of education makes it a facilitator rather than a teacher.

We are concerned that government policy undervalues the role of parents in the education of their children, and in that respect we regret that the pared-down committee mandate omitted the original reference to the important role parents had in the education of their children. Now, I suspect that that role is taken for granted by members of the committee, but it is our view that it needs to be firmly and expressly spoken to in the committee's summation and report.

Recently we were made aware of the fact that the ministry is working on a proposal that could lead to a legislated standard for parents who educate their children at home. This arises, I am told, from occasions where supervisory officers and parents have disagreed over the adequacy of a child's education at home. Knowing something about that, I think it is often a case of a supervisory officer in one tradition unable to recognize the validity of education taking place in another fashion. Perhaps Joel's remarks would bear that out.

The ministry has said it wants to design a procedure that will be helpful to parents and supervisory officials in making arrangements that are consistent and fair and that recognize—and I think this is important—that a wide variety of teaching methods may be used in the instruction of a child.

We appreciate the ministry's real concern to find procedures that are consistent and fair, but we believe it is an abuse of the policy, if not of the legislative process, to set a satisfactory instruction standard for parents in law when no such standard exists for public, separate or independent schools, and it could very easily be taken to bring pressure on parents as though they are not responsible for their children's education but the state is.

What the development illustrates is the need, I think, for government to come to grips with the prior right of parents to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their child as the very core of public policy, which would do justice to all bona fide philosophies of education,

and it is in the context of parental rights and the statements previously given here that we wish to discuss the issues that are of particular interest for this stage of the hearings. We look upon this meeting somewhat as an extension of the previous one and we do not want to belabour the philosophical point to the exclusion of the practicalities that you are dealing with.

In a sense, we bring no new recommendation. We have recommended that the select committee be reconstituted or that an all-party committee on alternative education—employing the 1985 report of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario as a supporting document, because it deals so comprehensively with the question of educational direction and diversity—be struck to try to find a way of implementing, calling all groups of goodwill into that forum for discussion. In a sense, that is where we take off from and we hope our discussion today will contribute to the acceptance of that particular recommendation, which is indeed an implementation recommendation.

With that, I would like to leave it to you, the committee, to talk to the professional people who have come here today about your areas of concern and, I hope, gain something from their subjective experience and responses.

Madam Chairman: Do any other members of your delegation have comments before we go to the members for questions?

Mr. L. McBurney: It might be good to take a minute from each, just coming down the line, if that is fair. Mr. Kravitz, is a minute enough?

Mr. Kravitz: That is enough. First of all, as a private special education school and a private preparatory school, we have no difficulty with OSIS as a document stating the philosophic issues of the province in reasonable terms for our day and age. On the other hand, when we present it to our parents, which we have done because we felt it was important they understood what that document was and what it meant, especially for those children entering secondary school, we discovered to our horror that their perception of the school system was that the document represented what should be done but what, in their experience with their other children, had not been done. In other words, in terms of practical application, they felt a lot of the objectives and goals were wonderful, but their kids were in our particular school because they felt it was not happening in the public sector, from their experience.

So there is some question about the application of what is being stated and beautiful-

ly written. Ministry documents usually are beautifully written, and often quite current, but the application of those documents as they pass down through the streams does not seem to get down to the roots, and the teachers are not prepared to deliver on the basis of the documents themselves.

I do not think we have problems in stating the philosophies; I think we have problems in implementing the philosophies. I think that is what we have to get at. How do we get teachers to be respectful of children, as Joel McBurney was asking? How do we get it to happen? That is a tough one. I do not know how to get it to happen outside of my own context, outside of my own schools, where I will fire a teacher for consistent sarcasm. I think we have to deal with things in that kind of reality. As a federation member, I know how tough it is to get a teacher out of a job. That is the other end of the stick, but I do not have that problem.

Ms. Struik: At this point, I will pass.

Ms. Priesnitz: I would like to pick up on something I heard discussed at the tail end of the last presentation and share with you a personal experience with my own family. To give you a bit of background, my two daughters, who are now 15 and 16, were educated at home prior to going into the public system at the grade 9 level. They are now in grades 10 and 12. They, in a sense, dropped in rather than dropped out of the formal education system.

They had a transition, such as was being spoken of before, from grade 8 to grade 9 that was, I think you can appreciate, a little more traumatic than the transition that a child would make going from a public elementary school to a public high school. It was not a great transition for them, however, even though it was a little bit like culture shock. They felt cushioned by their earlier experience, which I think is relevant to what we are discussing here.

They did not feel the alienation and the isolation for a number of reasons. They had developed very good self-concepts, and I have to attribute a great deal of that, not to be overly humble, to the fact that they had a great deal of security, a very strong community sense, had experienced a great deal of respect from the adults in their lives, all the sorts of things we have been dealing with. They also had spent a great deal of time with a wide variety of age groups, other home-schooling families with children from birth to 16 or 17, adults, as well as their own-age peers.

I think that is a relevant experience, something that we can take and apply to the schooling situation when we talk about the need for community and other sorts of things like that; often things that are found in independent schools, small groups of people and so on, things that the other people who are more professional than I, I am sure, will deal with.

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I was concerned when there was the suggestion made that it was a community or a school board issue. I think it is much bigger than that. I think it is what we are talking about. It is what you have been talking about in these hearings, the fact that it is really a way of thinking about education that we are talking about.

I would just like to caution you to not push that whole idea of a set of values being relevant to a child's education on to just sort of a transition mechanism that a school board or an individual school can facilitate and that will solve the problem.

Mr. Vanderven: Maybe I can pick it up on the vision aspect of education. The group of schools that I represent, Canadian Reformed schools, certainly do not stand out as a group of people who are any better than anyone else. We are struggling in our own situation with our own shortcomings and weaknesses, but thinking of our vision of education, and specifically thinking of the effectiveness of education, we cannot but emphasize the fact that it is essential that there is—

Madam Chairman: I am sorry. Could you lean a little closer to the mike? Apparently Hansard is having trouble picking you up. If you could just slide over a little.

Mr. Vanderven: Shall I pick up my comments again?

Madam Chairman: I think that is fine.

Mr. Vanderven: I would like to emphasize the fact that thinking of effectiveness, be it teacher effectiveness or student effectiveness, it cannot be done in any kind of a sensible way unless there is a vision of education, a picture of what we think people should be like. Coming from a Christian background, I cannot but testify that that must be a statement of belief, be it religious or otherwise. It is for that reason also that from our side our efforts are in that direction.

At times, we find ourselves limited in the material that the ministry throws at us. The OSIS document is mentioned, Radwanski's report is with us and so on. We find ourselves limited in

exercising what we consider to be our educational duty by the suggestions that are being made.

We are in the business of trying to generate effective education, effective teacher education, but only on the basis of a philosophical statement, a vision of education. Only then a discussion on standardized testing, a discussion on streaming and a discussion on particular pedagogy starts to make sense to us.

We hope that your committee will also recognize that within Ontario there are people out there who need to be enabled—and let me use that word; there is the enabling task of the government—who need to be enabled to respond to what they consider to be, by all that is holy to them, their educational mandate. That is probably enough now.

Ms. Hughes: I have no idea where to begin, but there are two things that occur to me right off the top of my head. I came to Toronto in 1968 to help start what was then the first Waldorf School in Canada. There are now, depending on how you define such a school, between 14 and 16 schools in the country, four or five within 30 miles of Metro Toronto. There are now 400 to 500—we cannot keep up with how many schools there are—around the world.

If you ask me what is responsible for this growth, I could not really answer it. I certainly could not answer it in this context. Waldorf schools are a good example of independent schools because they are based on a distinct philosophy rather than a religious base. But I would hope that this committee would ask itself the questions: What is going on here? Why are these schools growing? Why are parents choosing an education system like Waldorf, which actually runs philosophically against so much current thinking in the mainstream? Why are they desperate to get their children into it? Why do we have 50 or 60 parents trying to get their children into our grade 1 when we can take only 28 children?

What is going on here? I think that is a real question, and I am a great believer in dealing with the realities of education and not with the verbiage. I am sure you do not have to be told that education is probably almost worse than politics when it comes to dealing with verbiage.

Mr. Jackson: So what does that make us?

Mr. Mahoney: I did not know there was a difference, by the way.

Ms. Hughes: That is a pity, is it not? I think that says everything. There probably is; that is the trouble.

The other thing I would just add is that my favourite quotation, which I work into every paper that I do for the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, is the T. S. Eliot quote, "Between the idea/And the reality.../Falls the Shadow." I was reminded of it again in listening to Joel's description of how he feels in the regular school system and Marty's remark about the beautiful documents that come out of the ministry.

These documents are very beautiful and what they say is probably philosophically sound, but of course it is not the what of objectives, we can all agree on those, it is how; how do you actually meet them? So often even quite intelligent people seem to forget this. I hope you are looking at the reality and not just at the beautiful ideas.

That is it for now.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Hughes. I certainly hope as well that we are looking at reality. I know the members present are certainly attempting our very best.

Ms. Hughes: That is probably what you are doing.

Madam Chairman: Most of the time we hope we know what we are doing.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I wish I were quite as sure as the chairman that we knew exactly what we are doing. I think sometimes we are very much cut off in the shadow and not really seeing too much very clearly.

I find it a little frustrating to know how to deal with your kind of brief. The first time I did not ask any questions because it seemed to me that the philosophical premises that you are dealing with are ones that we have to deal with; but at this stage of what we are supposed to be dealing with, I am not sure how to cope with that, because it is not specifically on our agenda at the moment.

If I might ask you a couple of practical questions around the effects of OSIS on your system, for instance, or on your schools and on the varying approaches of your schools, pardon me for just assuming that we do have to deal with the major underlying issues you are talking about but that, for this instant today, knowing we will see you again, I would like to just deal with a couple of the other matters.

Yesterday Professor Tom Symons et al. were here speaking from the other group of independent schools and the Canadian Educational Standards Institute. One of the points they raised, which I presume must affect you as well, in point 30 of their report, was that OSIS was stifling the curriculum creativity, if I can put it that way, in their school system; that in a number of their

schools, I think he said—and correct me if I am wrong, members—there were hundreds of examples of courses that had to be dropped from their series of schools' curricula because they no longer seemed to fit within OSIS. He gave us just two examples of that point, and they are going to send us a whole range of others to show us the kind of really high-quality courses, internationally recognized in one case, that had to be dropped.

I wondered whether, anecdotally, you can tell me if that same sort of thing is happening to your schools or how you deal with it. They were very frustrated by the lack of a real appeal mechanism, by the fact that the inspectors who dealt with them changed a lot or had been changing a lot and that each one seemed to have a different set of emphases. If you could maybe talk a little bit from your perspective about that, I would be interested in hearing how it works for you.

Mr. Kravitz: We deal with it politically because we have children who, in our system, want to go to post-secondary education. I think that is a reality for our population; so you respond to your population, which means that our kids need core. We have a very strong art program because we have a large percentage of learning-disabled kids with very great art talent. It is a phenomenon which we are starting to recognize. On the other hand, they need the English, the math, the sciences, geography courses and history courses if they are going to cope with post-secondary education no matter where they go, if they are just going to have a basic life foundation and knowledge.

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We also have a music program because of the artistically oriented kids we have. On the other hand, we do not go far outside of that. So OSIS is not a straitjacket for us. On the other hand, there is OSIS in terms of allowing us to have a youngster walk away from a French program because the auditory processing memory he has is zilch, so we can do it.

The only constraint there is that 115, 110—the hour thing. That drives us out of our minds because I have kids who need 300 hours to finish a course because they need reflective time. They have others who will do it in 10. I love the idea of giving a child a credit for 20 words a minute in typing because using a computer typing-assist program I can have half of my students there in about a week. So we do not need the formal typing program in that sense.

What we are saying is that OSIS, in our case, is not restrictive. However, I think in other cases it is, where they have a status program like at

Trinity College School or Pickering. A lot of these schools have developed a curriculum that is currently creative and effective within the guidelines, except, because they are non-specified, they have to apply for each course. It is like going into court every time you take a course in. You can get it tossed out because somebody did not like you, did not like the look on your face, did not have a good breakfast or had a fight with his wife. It is so subjective—

Mr. Mahoney: Or a husband.

Mr. Kravitz: —or a husband, thank you—it is so subjective that you really do not know what you are going to get. It can be that way, but it was not intended that way. Also, they are reading it wrong in a lot of cases. I would like to take them and sit down with some of them and show them that they can fit a lot of those courses into guidelines. They just are straitjacketed in their own minds, not in the case of the document. I think that is part of the problem, too.

We have to deal with it rationally, but sometimes we do not because it is us versus them. That kind of mentality tends to happen instead of saying, "Okay, how do we get around the problem?" We are not problem-solvers enough. Solve problems and a lot of the straitjackets go away.

Ms. Hughes: We were on a 12-grade curriculum, quite distinct from the public school curriculum. We were very nervous about OSIS. I am not actually a member of the high school faculty or I have not been through all the discussions, but my impression is that actually, with a little creative thinking, one can fit our whole curriculum into the demands of OSIS.

We had to change a couple of courses from grade 9 to grade 10 or switch because we think you should do organic chemistry before inorganic. But they were very minor compromises. We were really quite delighted. I think we also were fortunate with the ministry people we spoke to who wanted us to keep our curriculum and made sure it did fit in. That is probably the critical point.

Mr. L. McBurney: The connection that I would make with philosophy in that situation is, for example, that the ministry will determine that history courses—teaching parliamentary institutions—should be at grades 9 and 10, I think it is. They will specify a certain amount of time and even content.

There may be a school somewhere which out of their view of the child says: "It would be more appropriate and more interesting to save what is dry-as-dust stuff for grades 12 or 13. We can do it

in half of the allotted time and in a much more imaginative way." But they will be told, "No, you cannot do that." In that respect there are straitjackets. Therefore, if the policy of government at large were to encourage schools of thought in education, the guidelines would be more general.

It may become somewhat more complex in terms of how you measure it, but nevertheless it seems to me there should be an opportunity for those kinds of experimentation and development which quite often come out of a different view of what learning is, to say nothing of a confessional stand.

I could give you another example which is real. Some years ago some of the Christian schools that I was associated with wanted to develop a man-in-society course. It quite clearly carried their confessional standard, what they thought about life. That was not allowed, because it was seen by the ministry officials at that time as too "religious."

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have one question which may be just quasi-rhetorical in a sense in that I may already know the answer, which is that the question of streaming, I presume, is a question which does not really affect your system a great deal or affects it so differently in terms of the varying schools that it is not something easy to deal with.

Do most of your schools deal with ability grouping kind of things? Do any of them have other kinds of streaming which may not fit exactly the basic school notion that develops in the public school system?

Mr. L. McBurney: There may be a differing answers from my association. I am going to ask Ms. Struik, because I know she has some views about this.

Ms. Struik: I think the whole ideas of streaming and ability grouping both do not do justice to the child in many ways, and so there is more of an emphasis towards allowing each child to work up to his potential—and I heard that word "potential" being used here sort of in a negative way—so that you are dealing with each child, whatever level he may be at, within the context of certain goals and objectives set for students at different grades.

I think the whole idea of streaming and ability grouping—and Radwanski talks about that as well—has negative effects on a person's sense of self, and so there has been an emphasis to move away from that kind of thing as opposed to putting it in place.

One of the reasons they can do that, I think, is because of the context in which the whole education takes place. Usually these schools are small and there is much more of a communal atmosphere. As Ms. Priesnitz mentioned before, students have exposure to a lot of different age levels. There is a lot of helping, sharing, knowledge and understanding with each other within the classroom and classrooms. There is a sense in which that whole communal context, that whole sense of meaningfulness in education, I guess, is important to those schools I work with.

Mr. Mahoney: I guess, in a way, a formalization of streaming is only formalizing what students probably did for many years prior to its ever being formalized, not even thinking about it. They would just do it naturally.

Just to clarify something, in the transition from grade 8 to grade 9 it was not suggested either by me or by the Dufferin-Peel separate board that it simply be left to the board, but clearly, if you are teaching your child at home, then you are that child's school board and it is your responsibility, in whatever way, along with the parents, if you happen to be the parents, the teacher, the school board and the administration, to ensure that transition takes place as smoothly as possible. It is obviously in your interest and your child's interest to do that.

In the case of a public school system, or a separate school system being public, it is my suggestion that it is a responsibility of the elementary board transferring that child, the secondary board, the parents and the community to ensure that transition is as smooth as possible. No one was suggesting that you simply tell the board to take care of it and wash your hands. I hope I did not give a wrong impression on that issue.

Your success is a very interesting question. What is going on and why is there such an increase in private schools? I think there are a lot of answers to that question, by the way, and I do not really want to get into all of those; everything from yuppism to learning disabilities and other problems probably could slot into the answer.

The real issue here, in my opinion, is class size and the ability of a child to learn without being streamed, to learn on an individualized basis where there are 15 other kids in the class and a teacher who is relating to them and can spend time with them, and the communal atmosphere. I just wonder if any of you feel it is even realistic to look for an answer to the question of what is going on. How do you compare a school of 2,000 students, such as Erindale Secondary School in

my community, to a school like Mentor School, with 400 kids? How do you possibly even attempt to deliver similar based educational programs when you are delivering them en masse or when you are delivering them, at a very expensive fee to the parents, on such an individual basis?

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I guess I am saying that in a sense I hear you criticizing the public school structure as compared to your structure, but it seems to me the answers are pretty simple. The answers are that you guys have got a system going, which I applaud in many ways, as an alternative form of education, but there are many parents, the vast majority of parents, who simply cannot afford to send their child to a private school or are not willing to send their child, whether they can afford it or not, to a private school. How can we expect those two levels of education to ever come together; and should we?

Mr. Kravitz: Yes.

Mr. Mahoney: Okay, tell me how.

Mr. Kravitz: Because we are a heck of a good lab. The group which was in before was talking about model schools. I think you have among your private schools probably the biggest laboratory in the world. Among us we are using and trying every approach, every method which ever would be, which has been written about, and if that information were researched and shared there is a lot to be learned.

We learn a lot from the public schools. We constantly go out and look to see what they are doing and how they are doing it. They do not come and look at us, because we are private and there is a bit of a stigma attached to being a private school. On the other hand, that is not always the case. Teachers who have been in and out of our programs come back and keep looking because they know we will keep experimenting because we are looking for answers for individual differences in children.

We can also apply technology which has been developed in research at a much more rapid rate than a public system can, because we can do it tomorrow or the day after. We have only half a dozen staff to train in each thing, where you have hundreds in the public sector. I think you have to start looking at that size as your enemy, the size of your institutions. You are going to have to start working out ways where institutions of 2,000 can figure out a way of breaking the school down to units of no more than 400 or 500 because beyond that you cannot develop any kind of identifica-

tion or self-concept for the child. They are going in there and they are a number. When they start realizing that, they walk.

The alienation of a student is not the only problem. The teachers are being alienated. I go into a staff room and there are 85, 90 people in it. In some schools of 2,000, there may be 120 teachers. I do not even know half the staff. There is no way. It takes me two or three years and by then I am gone to another high school.

The other problem is the streaming. Streaming basically was not a bad idea because it was formalizing what we were already doing: forms A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and I. I taught G and H and I knew I had general level to basic level kids. Sure I did, the same kids. I taught them the same curriculum but I knew they were not going to learn it as well because I knew they did not have the basic skills. I was lucky. I was a special-education teacher walking in the door teaching lower stream kids, in those days when we had them, and I knew my mandate was not just the course but to teach them to read and to write. So I did that and messed up the bell curve and got into trouble.

But that was not the issue. The issue, I learned very quickly, was that all of those kids who are coming into secondary school who are functioning in terms of basic skills below levels of necessity to cope with the advanced to general courses can in many cases acquire those levels if you give them some time and some energy in that area. But the teachers do not have time. Neither does the mandate of the courses say so. The basic-level program does not say very, very clearly, "You are to teach the three Rs," and it has to or they will not do it; and they are not getting that in the in-service; they will not do it.

As a matter of fact, when I suggested it at one of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation conferences, I think I had 90 per cent of them ready to shoot me. But I did it when I was teaching in a vocational school. They were basic-level kids. We were dealing with RP-35 and we said: "The heck with RP-35. These are not nonacademic kids. These are kids who are just learning at a slower rate of development; start teaching them the things that they should have been getting in grades 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8." Lo and behold, they were learning them.

I have research here that goes back to the days when we were fighting about vocational schools, the segregation and that sort of nonsense. The only complaint the kids had about those basic-level programs is that, "When we got out there, we really could not read and write well enough

and when we came to having to learn new jobs we did not know how to learn." What we did not realize in those days is that we were dealing with a population that we could classify, in Cruikshank's terms—not in the Ministry of Education's terms—as learning disabled. They were learning different and had become disabled because they have not overcome the learning differences.

So what we are looking at is the basic, the streaming. Streaming is a political realization of a reality that existed. Unfortunately, it has overtones now that are making it impossible to deal with. You are right; if we could cut class size, retrain our teachers to teach more of the basics within the content of the courses that they are required to teach, cut down the amount of content and focus on process—as some of the guidelines are starting to do now, thank God—we could do it.

Mr. Mahoney: But the bottom line of your initial yes response is to cut class sizes and school sizes right across the board.

Mr. Kravitz: Yes.

Mr. Mahoney: And the implications of that to a public system are pretty serious.

Mr. Jackson: That is one of three recommendations. It would be misleading to suggest that is the base recommendation. It is part of three things that occur is what I heard. I am pretty nervous about isolating reduce class size and you resolve your problem.

Mr. Kravitz: They would go on teaching the same way they were with the 35.

Mr. Jackson: Exactly.

Mr. Kravitz: They have to change the approach to teaching; they have to individualize.

Mr. Jackson: Limit the number of casualties.

Mr. Kravitz: That is right.

Mr. Jackson: Okay.

Mr. Mahoney: However, if I still have the floor, I think the basis of the answer was to take that 2,000-pupil school and reduce it to four components of no more than 500—400 to 500 kids; then once you have done that, change a lot of the ways in which they are taught, go to the types of the methodologies that these folks are talking about. You cannot do that when you have 34 or 35 kids in a class and they are all rushing to go to the next class.

It is fine to say that we should change the philosophy, but the reality is that without job one you are not going to get an opportunity. That is what I heard in the answer; you are not going to get an opportunity to properly affect jobs two and

three. I do not think it was misleading to suggest that, with respect.

Madam Chairman: Time is growing very short.

Mr. Mahoney: Thank you. I am finished.

Madam Chairman: I think Mr. McBurney wanted to make a brief comment, and then we will go to Mr. Jackson.

Mr. L. McBurney: Yes. I just wanted to say that public education was centralized partly because it had a central philosophy; it was a philosophy of centralization, and élitist in the sense that everything was developed up here by people sharing a like view. In addition to that, the economies of scale were sold to combine the boards in large administrative units, so there has been a distancing effect by people like us who started out by trying to work in many cases within public school frameworks and who still do. Witness my son.

I think you have part of the answer in your hands in the Shapiro commission report, because he says "If you are going to diversify public education, diversify it," and he provides—albeit perhaps a faulty model; certainly there is a lot of criticism within my ranks—a number of options, or at least one option: a school associated with a board receiving something less than the full grant, but allowing a certain flexibility of governance and movement.

You can go farther with that and, say, a voucher system, of course, à la Friedman and some kind of free enterprise idea. I do not uphold that, but what I am saying here is that perhaps what the committee has to look at, both now and in its extended mandate, is what to do to change the structures of public education in ways that are not disruptive but allow the flow so that excellence attracts its imitators.

Then you may have schools that can do the kinds of things that Mr. Kravitz wants to be able to do—for example, he has the freedom to fire an incompetent staff member. Now there is a \$9 billion or \$10 billion structure here with a lot of players and they are protecting their slice; but give the opportunity to the people—suppose that they build up part or full funding and that the price is that the teachers will work here without a grid, or at least in a different kind of grid than they do in public schools.

We know there are teachers who leave public education—you are talking to some of them today—who take much less in salaries to be able to exercise their educational freedom and responsibility in a way that feels good to them. It seems to me that is the kind of thing you want to build in

the public policy, so Shapiro provided at least one model, a springboard to be able to say the associated independent school; or at arm's length, a school that just gets programs of limited support.

1630

That may be clumsy but at least it was an attempt to provide something and if you put that close and in some way in association with public education, where it belongs in its broad terms, then people learn.

Jane Dobell, former chairperson and I think still currently trustee in Ottawa, came to one of my annual meetings to tell us how she viewed us and the Shapiro commission report, but her experiences from Ottawa were replete with instances saying they did things that sometimes they did reluctantly as trustees due to parental pressure and found out later that this was a good thing educationally. When Jane tells that story at the Association of Large School Boards of Ontario, it rubs off.

If people have found working experiments it rubs off. It seems to me that what we have to do in education is find some way of providing some options that will allow the structure to change over time and where the principle of voluntary entry is the highest possible. You will hear it from most independent school people. They do not want full funding because they fear the ties that attach.

Personally, I think they should ask for full funding; they should not be halfway citizens in any respect. But it does illustrate a principle. They are prepared to give up something to be free to do the thing that meets their commitments, and that I guess is our continuing contribution to this committee. The argument for the acceptance of a diversity of viewpoints I think facilitates that kind of experimentation.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. McBurney. A final question by Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Jackson: It sounded like a very appropriate close, but I really do have a question I would like to pursue. It has to do with semestering for the deputants who are here today who have a secondary experience within your areas of responsibility. Could you talk to us very briefly about the model you currently use, why you use it and if there are plans to move from it?

We have heard some conflicting statements about semestering. We have heard of a report which indicates math performance can be measured and the semestered school performance is down over a nonsemestered school. We have heard several things, but I would be interested in

hearing, even if you can talk about other experiences within your association because it is broadly based. It would be helpful to me if you could talk about your preference in that area and the reasons for it and its application within the systems you represent. Any one of you can lead off.

Ms. Hughes: I personally have a bias against semesters because I think education is an evolving process between the students and the teacher and that that develops over the course of the year. The idea of semesters, to me, means instant, packaged units to get it done. That is just my personal—I mean, we would never consider that in our school.

Mr. Jackson: So all those schools are not semestered at the secondary level?

Ms. Hughes: No, but why does it have to be one or the other? Semestering works in the high schools I have been in, where the teachers think it is the best idea—the teachers, not the principal. If the teachers think it is a good idea, it works. If the teachers do not think it is a good idea, it does not work, whatever the principal says. It is as simple as that.

Mr. Jackson: We have heard that a couple of times.

Mr. Vanderven: Directly on your question, sir, Guido de Bres Private School is semestered. I can only comment as to what they are doing. I am not directly involved in the school there at that level, but it is semestered. As far as I understand from the staff and the principal, they have some reservations in that kind of direction but, organizationally, it seems to work fine. Currently, there is no indication at all whether it in fact has improved the effectiveness of the school as a whole.

Mr. Jackson: So your Christian reformed secondary schools are not semestered.

Mr. Vanderven: They are semestered.

Mr. Jackson: They are semestered, okay. Thank you. Mr. Kravitz, do you have a quick comment?

Mr. Kravitz: I have been following this argument since it started, in the days when we thought about it at the OSSTF and had the original experimentation and research by Alan King. They are right about the math. The math is a problem, but I think it is possible, through curricular adaptations and methodological approaches, to sustain. On the whole, it is better for most kids because it provides for a much more relaxed learning atmosphere.

On a relationship basis, if I am teaching six classes of 35 kids a day, and those kids are just hitting me like that, bang, I would rather teach three a day for 70-minute periods. Then I will get to know those 105 kids within a week or two. I cannot do it.

Ms. Hughes: It is probably true in the large school.

Mr. Kravitz: In the large school it drives me nuts, but in our little school of 140 kids, where I already know all the kids, everybody knows everybody else and it works beautifully. If a youngster walks into a math class after being away for a while, we know that we are dealing with 80 per cent learning-disabled kids. We know that the short-term memory loss is there. We pick it up and we do not have any problem with it. Math, music, history, art—it does not matter.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the association for the very diverse views that came before us today. It is quite interesting to see from the various sectors how you complement each other and yet have various experiences to offer. Thank you for your presentation.

Ms. Priesnitz: I would like to thank the committee for hearing us today. If you do pick up on our recommendation to reconstitute the committee, we are certainly at your disposal whenever you need us for advice.

Madam Chairman: Just a moot point, but it is actually the Legislature that does make that decision. It is, as you know, not now in session. Unfortunately for your sake, we will have to proceed with our current mandate as legislated by the members.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There is no real need to reconstitute our committee to deal with the issue you want us to deal with. Within our general mandate, that is possible for us to deal with.

Mr. Jackson: We will be dealing with it on our agenda.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is a matter of whether the committee continues to exist, rather than its requiring to be reconstituted.

Mr. Jackson: That is right. We get very cynical before you and the rest of the public get very cynical. That will be the other test.

Mr. Mahoney: Settle down. You are too important to be dismissed.

Madam Chairman: Agendas are yet to be set, so you may always hope.

Our next presentation is by the Mississauga Board of Trade. Would Mr. Leamy and Mr.

McCaskill please come forward. Welcome to the committee. It is nice to see you here. I should mention that we have allocated half an hour for your presentation, including question time at the end for the members, so we do hope you will allow enough time for us to ask some stimulating questions, even though we are getting later in the day. Please identify yourself for purposes of electronic Hansard and begin whenever you wish.

MISSISSAUGA BOARD OF TRADE

Dr. McCaskill: Thank you. I am Dave McCaskill. I am here in my capacity as a director and member of the education committee of the Mississauga Board of Trade. I would like to introduce you to Adam Leamy, who is our research and policy director at the Mississauga Board of Trade.

At the outset, we would like to thank you for this opportunity to have some input into your deliberations on how to improve the Ontario education system. I will take your remarks to leave enough room for some questions seriously. I think that would optimize your ability to focus in on your most prominent concerns.

The Mississauga Board of Trade represents 1,700 member companies in Mississauga, and these companies, in turn, employ over 100,000 individuals. At the time of its release, we called the Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts an important document demanding close and careful scrutiny and placed it before our education committee for its analysis. The education committee comprises business people and educators and has examined the report in detail from a business perspective. Through its board of directors, the Mississauga Board of Trade formally responded to the report in a letter to the Minister of Education dated June 14, 1988.

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As was made clear in the Radwanski report and was reiterated in the Premier's Council report of April 1988, the Ontario educational system must improve its commitment to students' educational excellence. It will not be enough for the Ontario education system to simply produce more high school graduates. Indeed, the system will have to produce more high school graduates able to enter the workforce with the skills, attitudes, knowledge and flexibility to perform complex tasks in a rapidly changing social and economic environment.

In appearing before you this afternoon, we will be presenting the recommendations developed

by the board's education committee in response to the Radwanski report. Our submission reflects issues of concern to business as identified by our members and developed by our education committee.

In encouraging the government to continue its efforts to improve the province's elementary and secondary school system, the Mississauga Board of Trade looks forward to the consideration of its recommendations in any changes made by the Ministry of Education to Ontario's education policy.

The Mississauga Board of Trade recommends above all that while making changes to the education system in this province, the government avoid making further incremental modifications to the existing system. We ask that the government focus instead on re-examining the basic philosophy behind the system with its guiding principle being to ensure that all aspects of our education system have a purpose and effectively achieve prescribed goals.

I submit the report on behalf of the president of the Mississauga Board of Trade, Fred Troughton.

Our response to the Radwanski report indicates that the Radwanski report raises some fundamental issues regarding the purpose and direction of the education system in Ontario. Several of these recommendations are relevant to and can be appropriately commented on by the business community. We will focus on the recommendations pertaining to the objectives of education, the standards in education, the core curriculum and the quantity of part-time employment of high school students.

1. The objectives of education. The Radwanski report makes repeated reference to the objectives of education. The teaching of universal fundamental values such as self-respect, respect for others, honesty, fairness and tolerance are and must remain objectives of the Ontario education system. The Mississauga Board of Trade recognizes the responsibility of parents and churches in the teaching of these fundamental values and, as such, we envisage the school's function in the development of values to be that of serving as a supplement to or a reinforcer of the efforts of parents and churches.

It is therefore recommended that the objectives of education be defined in terms of the reinforcement of specified fundamental values and the acquisition of demonstrable knowledge and skills by all students.

2. Standard province-wide testing. There exists a need for educators and researchers to

devise innovative and sound techniques to test levels of mastery of core subjects. It is within this context that we discuss standard province-wide testing.

The board believes that the mastery of the core subjects required by students to adequately prepare them for work and for life cannot vary across Ontario. The board suggests that if the high school diploma certifies that the graduate has passed tests, and if that certification is to be valid province-wide, so too must the tests and the standardization thereof.

Accordingly, we recommend that province-wide testing be instituted for the common core subjects. Only students who pass these tests should graduate with a high school graduation diploma.

3. Minimum core content, including business. The board is mindful that the program content proposed in the Radwanski report is to assist students in their preparation for life and workforce activity. Neglected in the proposed program content are those courses which assist students in developing interpersonal skills and directly employable skills.

We further believe that study should be made of the values, knowledge, skills and levels of scholastic achievement actually needed for and useful in life or work. We suggest a course in business is of immense use to all students preparing to enter the workforce. Such a course should cover the fundamental aspects of business operations such as managing, marketing, human resources, finance, computerization, accounting, legal issues and, just as important, business ethics.

It is therefore recommended that a minimum core program content be prescribed for all secondary school students. The content should include subjects specified by the Radwanski report and at least one course in business. In addition, before the recommendations on minimum core program content are implemented, further studies should be done to determine the levels of proficiency in the program content essential for success in life and work.

4. Quantity of part-time employment of high school students. The board believes that as business has the right to offer employment to students, students and their parents can and should exercise sound judgement in determining what portion of part-time employment is excessive and therefore detrimental to the student's studies, health and social wellbeing.

Nevertheless, we see no reason why there cannot exist a partnership between government,

business and secondary schools on this issue so that the term "excessive part-time employment" can be defined to the benefit of all parties. Accordingly, we recommend that the government of Ontario, in partnership with business and educators, define that amount of part-time employment during the school year deemed to be excessive.

Thank you. We are ready for questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for your presentation. I would just mention to members before we go to questions that with the last several presenters, I have had to cut off questions at the end simply because we have run out of time. If members could keep their preambles shorter than the questions, it might eliminate some of that problem. We will now open up for questions.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It may not surprise you to know that I have difficulty with your recommendations. I am trying to find one I agree with, without any success.

Let's start at the end. Can I ask you what purpose you think there is to this notion of defining what is somehow excessive part-time work? Speaking as someone who was raised on a farm, I took personal offence at the elitist notions of what work is all about that Radwanski incorporated in that part of his report. It was not uncommon for me and for friends who had much heavier duties than I had to work about three hours a day on the farm as well as taking an hour-and-a-half school bus ride each way and therefore getting up around 5:30 a.m. for most of my high school life.

There is such a lack of recognition in this kind of focus of the economic reality of many people's lives, whether they are working class kids in the city or farm kids or whatever, that I really find that kind of concentration worrisome. The issue surely is that kids are working excessively because school is terribly boring or because they want to acquire all the status symbols that are important to them at that level in high school. It is not the kids who are working because they are part of an economic unit, the family, which really requires them to work.

If we start to think that we are going to lay down the law about what is excessive work for families in this province, I tell you, we are going to have an incredibly class-ridden kind of society. It is just a total lack of recognition of what most kids have to deal with. That would be the first thing I want you to respond to.

Dr. McCaskill: I appreciate your putting your views so clearly and forcefully. It gives me a

chance to focus in on some of the concerns. I doubt whether we really disagree with this recommendation once we clarify some of the misunderstandings.

This recommendation is here because Radwanski takes a shot at all business broadly on the grounds that they are interfering with students' chances to get a proper education because of excessive employment, but he does not give us any statistics to back that up. He just shoots that out.

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As to whether every student in the province has the motivation, the drive and the ability to absorb your workload, I suspect there is quite a gamut in terms of people being able to successfully manage their education with the extracurricular work they are undertaking. Really it is again focused in on whether there is a genuine problem of some companies in our community hiring students and giving them part-time work that interferes with their education.

If there is: First, we are prepared—provided we get clear what "excessive" means and the standards are—to criticize those businesses. Second, we did put in the phrase "proper employment to students," so that students and parents can and should determine and exercise sound judgement on what constitutes excessive employment. If there are, as I am sure there are, families in a situation where a student is contributing to the family welfare and without that student's income the family would be in severely dire straits, I think the solution lies elsewhere in terms of social programs.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Or a major raise in the minimum wage. They would not have to work half as long if they got more money, but that is another matter.

The other factor that is left out of this is the question of human rights. Sixteen-year-olds and up—and that is what we are talking about here—have certain rights within our society, limited rights, fewer rights than people who are 18.

Mr. Jackson: They can leave school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They can leave school, for instance. That is right. I just think it is a cover-your-ass kind of approach to get back at Radwanski for a foolhardy kind of direction that he has taken to what is a serious problem in some cases. That is one thing. I think it is an area, if I were in your place, I would just steer wide of.

The other thing is, if you think business should be a core course, what do you think about labour

studies? Do you think you should have that as a core course as well? More people go and become labour than become business in this society.

When I look at the things you want—and you want basic standards to be established for this course as well, I guess; and across the province and province-wide testing to make sure that their business understanding is up to Conrad Black's notion of the world or whatever—I have a real problem with the notion that we are going to end up with business as a core course.

As some element within the social studies and economic studies a student can take within high school, great; but the notion of that being core curriculum is one which may even lead me to the barricades before it is all over.

Dr. McCaskill: What are the choices to succeed in life and work? They can be on the dole. That is not the best choice that most people would make. Otherwise they are going to be working either in government or in a business. The options are either they know something about business or they do not. Here is a chance for them to learn something about business.

If I read where you are coming from, I believe you were assuming that part of teaching business was teaching the values of Conrad Black. In here we focused in on business as being a subject to be learned and on subject matter; we focused in on skills for managing and for learning marketing and human resources skills. These are skills that anyone will need as an employee.

In terms of there being another course in the program, being labour, I am not sure what you meant there. Did you mean labour union member? Is that what you had in mind?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am talking about power relationships. Cam reminds me that I should be grateful that you have not used the words "entrepreneurial studies."

Mr. Jackson: Those are the ones he really blows up on. If you use the word "entrepreneurial" he goes wild. This is really an excellent report by his standards.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Exactly. If you look at the bias that is within your list of things that you have put in there—managing, marketing, human resources—there is a "management down" notion of what business is about, if I may put it that way. It has no notion, except as a commodity, of what labour's value is within that and what the power relationships are within the business community. I just think the bias there is not one that I would want to see inflicted, even in a nonentrepreneurial fashion.

Madam Chairman: It is not unusual for a Board of Trade to want this type of thing; so you may be somewhat unfair in that regard.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am always unfair in these matters.

Dr. McCaskill: I do not mind that, but I do not think we discussed it at great length; we really cannot be much different in position.

Now, what does management involve? All you people around this table are extremely skilled at management. We might call it administration. We might call it something else. What is involved in management? Setting objectives.

Mr. Jackson: I do his banking for him and we are not in the same political party.

Dr. McCaskill: I will let you make an exception, if there are exceptions.

Madam Chairman: The ones who have been elected more than once show strong management skills. There are a number of us in the room who have yet to be tested.

Dr. McCaskill: But you are dealing with committees, managing time, setting agendas, dealing with interpersonal skills. All those are management skills—skills that have application beyond just management. Management is a lot more than just giving the orders and being the boss, from our perspective.

Are we any closer than we were a second ago?

Mr. Leamy: I wanted to make a point about the hours of part-time employment. I think the reason that one was of concern to business simply was because it was an accusation that we were providing unacceptable levels of part-time employment for students.

When you talk to people in the business community, bear in mind that Mississauga is a growing business community. It is no longer an agricultural community, as it was only a short time ago. I believe we have one farm left. That is more of a hobby farm than it is anything else. Mr. Mahoney may be able to check me on that one.

Mr. Keyes: Is it his farm?

Mr. Mahoney: I would not be here, guys.

Mr. Leamy: What is of concern to a lot of our members is that the problem they are having is that they may be hiring a student for three hours a day and may be paying \$4, \$5 or \$6 an hour, whether it is working in a store or working in a business doing office work. What they are finding, though, is a great number of the students they are hiring who are working on a Tuesday and a Wednesday for their company are working later Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, at

one, two, three, four or any other number of companies.

With respect to Mississauga, those of you who are familiar with it, you realize we have these great industrial parks where we have street upon street of what you call factory or plant operations. You have a couple of desks out front and then 6,000 or 7,000 square feet of warehouse space out back. We have a lot of exporters and importers in Mississauga.

The problem is facing a lot of the business people who are located and running shops in these industrial plazas. It is complex issue with respect to transportation problems that we are having in the city of Mississauga, be it congested roadways or perhaps not the most efficient public transit system that we can possibly have.

When these people advertise for a warehouse person at \$7 an hour, they will get a phone call. Some of the prospective employees will say: "I don't have a car. How far are you away from the closest bus stop?" "We are about a mile and a half." "Thank you very much." The fellow cannot get somebody to work between the hours of nine to five.

The other comment people make is, "I am not going to sit in traffic in my car for \$7 an hour." Warehouse positions and some of the general service positions around some of these locations are not designed to be high-paying—\$10, \$11, \$12 or \$13 an hour.

We are talking about small business people. Again, we do not have a Goldfarb survey to back this up; these are comments we receive through letters from our members and through events that we organize on their behalf. What happens is that they are finding that students all of a sudden are developing quite an interest in this. They are willing to show up at 4:30 or 5 p.m. after the traffic has all disappeared. They are using their parents' cars. They are willing to stay until 8 or 9 p.m. Why? Because they can work there and make \$8, \$9 or \$10 an hour.

When we say we are concerned about the hours of part-time employment, we believe that it is a very complex issue. We have not viewed it with respect to the agricultural society because that is not what has been coming forth from our members. We present our views as a response to our members' concerns, not as a panacea to all the situations that may be occurring across this province in different communities with different backgrounds and different economic bases.

On the other hand, we are concerned about the hours of part-time employment. We are getting back from our educators that students are being

seduced, quite literally, by high wages. There is a shortage of students; the wages are going up. There are also businesses, I imagine you will agree, that are encouraging those students who are waffling on the borderline. "Do I go back, or do I start working and take home this \$7 an hour, using my parents' car and living out of my parents' home?" There are businesses that are luring those people out of the education system.

I think for a board of trade, for business people who have for years been screaming that the education system is not producing graduates capable of fitting into the workforce to trumpet that line and then, at the same time, completely back off from that question of part-time hours of student employment would be irresponsible.

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If we want the education system to be better, then we are saying that something must be done about the hours of part-time employment. We would welcome further study of this because it is a complex problem. Employers are taking part in it because of a number of other situations. They must have the help to run their offices and their plants.

No, we are not trying, as you say, to cover our asses on this one. We believe it to be a major issue. It is a concern to us, and we have to say it because we cannot call for greater reform of education and more success in that task without at the same time addressing that issue as well.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Leamy. I think I will pass you on to perhaps slightly friendlier hands, the member for Mississauga West, Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Mahoney: Interestingly enough, I had some strong sympathy with Richard's comments. I had better really check my roots, and he is probably going to rethink his position. I would just say to you that if you think it is a complex issue now, ask the government to define "excessive" and we will find out really how complex it can get.

Mr. Jackson: We are having trouble with "reasonable" with the retailers.

Mr. Mahoney: We are having some trouble with that, although some of the more reasonable members have defined "reasonable" without any great difficulty.

Mr. Jackson: Having accepted what has been fed to them.

Mr. Mahoney: It would seem to me, though—not to beat it to death—that this is almost streaming in the employment side of things. If you tell certain kids, "Okay, that's it; you are

now working excessively. Get home and study," it is just frankly, I have to say honestly, not a reasonable position that I think we could arrive at. I personally reject outright Radwanski's statement in that area, and I think he is being very simplistic about it.

There are still many kids today who may not be on the farm but are right here in urban Toronto, urban Mississauga, Scarborough, North York, all over the place, who must work, who have to work to be able to continue going to school, who have no opportunity but to have part-time jobs. I guess it is not really a question, but I would be very concerned about any attempt to have government meddling in such an area.

Having said that, I believe that if any board of trade is suggesting to its members that there should be some way to encourage kids publicly to stay in school through co-op programs, which we are starting to push through our Ministry of Skills Development, all of those kinds of things are very, very positive.

I wonder, though, if you would just comment a little bit further on whether you really think it should be core study or perhaps optional study of a business course. Obviously, I would have no difficulty with some things, like computerization, being in a core program—it is something that kids deal with and live with every day—or certain basic subjects, like family finances, human finances, that kind of stuff. But I too would have some difficulty with making a core subject "Business" or "Labour." Rather, they should be more general. If they are optional, as they were when I went to school, and certainly as you go on into post-secondary education, you can take particular subjects that will direct you in the area of business. Would it not make more sense to make it an optional course rather than core?

Dr. McCaskill: If I can address your preamble first, I think a number of members of the committee have gone beyond what we said and have interpreted us as having suggested somehow or other that, by legislation, no student be allowed to work excessive part-time hours. We did not say that. I think we said that students and their parents can and should continue to exercise sound judgement, etc.

Mr. Mahoney: If that is all you were saying, I am 100 per cent with you. The thing about the government of Ontario defining "excessive" frightens me.

Dr. McCaskill: The issue is what you do once you have got the definition, and we did not go very far on that one.

As to whether business should be a core subject, we are convinced that it should be a core subject, and whether it should be a core subject or an optional subject really goes to the heart of what the education system is all about, what are the objectives.

If the objectives are to prepare the student for life and for the world of work, for jobs, for employment or starting business, being a manager or whatever, then I do not see how you can avoid the conclusion that a course in business should be part of the core, learning about business, how to be an employee, how to be a manager, how business works, how important the customers are to a business, etc. Labour relations would be in there under human resources, not necessarily union philosophy but it would be covered in the course. It goes right back to the fundamental purpose of the educational system, as we see it.

That is our position.

Mr. Leamy: I think a comment supplementary to that would be that when we debated this through our education committee—again, sort of our response to the Radwanski report—there was some discussion about: "Okay, so we decrease the dropout rate and students are in school longer and they graduate with their high school degrees, but does that necessarily guarantee that at that point they will be going right along to community college or into universities or other forms of post-secondary education?"

We commend the idea of decreasing the dropout rate, but in the same respect, we also realize that a number of the students that do make it through will then immediately enter the workforce. They may not necessarily take a course in business if it is offered as an elective, if you will, but to facilitate their movement into the working world, no matter what the position, in order for them to gain an understanding before they get out there, before they close the door on education, we feel they should have an idea, if the course is kept current, of exactly what will be expected of them once they hit that workforce, what type of positions they may be involved in and what skills they will be needing.

To look at it on the surface, business as a core course, if business is going to be a core course, then so should everything else because every group can come in here and justify the importance of its particular interest as being worthy of having a core course devoted to it. On the other hand, we feel that decreasing the dropout rate does not mean that everybody is going to go on to post-secondary education. They are going to be

making the transition into the working world and, with this as a core course, that transition will be more easily facilitated and they will be able to have an idea if it is a good idea to close the door on education and what will be expected of them once they get out there.

Mr. Mahoney: By way of a final comment, it seems to me that guidance and counselling are the areas that should be covering those things. I quite agree that students should have a better understanding of expectations if they are going to leave school. What is it going to mean to them? In fact, if they really understood that and we did a good enough job of convincing them of what it was going to mean to them, most of them would probably stay in school because I think most of us would probably look at some point in our adult life and say, "Gee, school days were a lot better than I thought they were when I was there."

I can agree with the objective; I would have to give some serious thought to the methodology.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Mississauga Board of Trade for coming today. You have given us a chance to explore in depth one of the comments made this morning by Mr. Wernick. I think you did manage to stimulate a few of the thought processes around here.

Our final presentation today will be by Robert Brown. Members will notice that they now have a revised presentation in front of them. Would you please ensure that you have the August 1988 revised?

Welcome to our committee. We have allocated half an hour for your presentation and any questions that members may have. If you would leave sufficient time at the end, we would be very appreciative. Please begin whenever you are ready.

ROBERT BROWN

Mr. Brown: That was one of the reasons for the abbreviated version that you have before you. I am sure you have read the other document and I will make one brief reference to it. I am not necessarily going to follow verbatim the one before you either.

I would just like to say I really appreciate the opportunity to speak before the committee. I represent a group of parents. I have been watching your proceedings on television and you have heard from business and educators. I am an educator myself in the elementary panel. Your committee work was drawn to my attention by one of the members of our parent group, Parents Advocating Support and Success. We were formed last year in response to a situation in our

own local area, which I will not go into at this time, but it has to do with grade retention. When we saw your item in the paper, and that was one of your items of focus, we decided to make a presentation on that topic.

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Our concerns closely parallel the concerns expressed by educators and researchers for many years regarding this issue. These concerns typically involve the concern that boys, children born in the latter half of the year or children from minority groups, form the overwhelming number of students who are retained in schools that practise grade retention. Even among children of similar intellectual ability, the difference in developmental levels of elementary children—and that is our focus—especially in the primary division, is extreme, girls being four or five months developmentally ahead of boys, while children born in the spring are minimally six months developmentally ahead of children born in the fall. For this reason, many educators and parents in my group as well believe uniform standards of expectation for children at this level are inappropriate for the great majority of children.

This is supported in relevant literature, which you will find referenced both here and in the larger document you have been provided with. Boys do fail more often than girls. It happens, even though on an intelligence test in many cases there is very little difference in their scores. This might suggest, as some researchers have suggested, behaviour, neatness, personality and prejudice favouring the girls, who are usually more conforming, rather than the achievement level. An interesting comment that I have put down here is that the retention of students is as much the reflection of our capacity to educate as it is of the ability and effort of the students.

In our experience last year, we found that these research findings were true in our case. We found our case to be a classic example of what we found in the research when we went to look it up. We were also told of the view that some people hold that repeating a grade is a positive, supportive action and an opportunity for students to consolidate learning. In our view, this means that the remedial strategy is grade retention rather than assistance, support, call it what you like. This view is still held, in spite of widely available research studies which show that this consolidation does not take place. In fact, research suggests that less learning occurs in a repeated year. I have listed several items here for your perusal, the most interesting of which I think is

the one that says that the students learn less if they repeat. Sometimes it is even of less interest to them, especially if they are in the same class with the same teacher for a second year.

The last comment on the bottom of page 2 notes that research on the topic of pupil nonpromotion has been consistent since 1911. Using it as a means of fostering high standards for learning is not supported by research in the past 60 years. These findings, we believe, are evidence that grade retention is not appropriate as an educational strategy at the elementary level particularly. I do not want to cite all of the examples I gave you in my larger document.

In view of these research findings, we feel that no claims of positive effects of failure can be sustained. Making mistakes and failing is a natural and healthy part of learning for children. However, we believe it should be related to specific tasks. It is true that we learn from these mistakes, but continued and prolonged failure can stop growth all together and divert it into undesirable channels, such as inappropriate behaviour.

Each learning opportunity for a student should be challenging but achievable. Academic growth for each elementary child should be developmental and built on incremental challenges and successes. Schools must intervene when children are underachieving. However, research from across North America clearly indicates that repeating a child is the least effective strategy for a great majority of children. Specific modifications of their program clearly aimed at weak learning skills and offered to the children in an age-appropriate setting are consistently more effective in both academic and social growth.

We feel that grade retention is the ultimate negative reinforcement and, unfortunately, tends to be used by some as a disciplinary strategy. This is the "we will teach you a lesson you will never forget" approach, and this approach we believe is the seedbed of future school dropouts, since the only lesson that students, particularly young ones, learn from this is that they are inferior and unable to learn.

In the Ministry of Education's primary education project report, we could find no recommendations for grade retention. Last year Premier Peterson announced added funding for the primary division, which we applaud. He was quoted in the Toronto Star in August 1987 as saying that "children's earliest school years are critical, provide the foundation for learning and dictate students' later attitudes towards school." He felt that they were dropping out of school

"because their special learning needs were not being identified early enough;" and our favourite, "I think children thrive better on success than they do on failure." We agree with those statements.

Reduced class size in the primary division will make little difference in the years to come unless it is accompanied by two things: improvement in the teaching staff's ability to identify special learning needs and to deliver program modification and remedial support to ensure students' success. Appropriate assistance, given early, can prevent a disruption of children's basic faith in themselves as capable and worthwhile individuals.

Much has been said about back to basics in the last few years. I do not think children can go back. They are headed towards the future. We think we would be better served by a forward-to-fundamentals approach which still emphasizes those same basic skills, but builds on success and confidence achieved through positive reinforcement, encouragement and assistance rather than fear of failure.

We would like you to consider as well the statements of educational philosophy and goals of a private school that we have included in our larger document. They state things about parental involvement which we agree with. I will let you read those on your own.

In summary, the most appropriate path with regard to the grade promotion/retention issue would involve a thorough investigation of relevant literature and formulation and implementation of appropriate program modification and remediation policies and practices. This would permit teachers in consultation with specialist personnel and parental involvement and appropriate support to identify programs and instructional strategies that would enable students to master the required skills. We believe this approach to be a positive step to ensure student success.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. I must say that when I read your original brief, I found it very helpful for all the references to various research that had been done. I particularly like your line about not returning to back to basics but going forward to fundamentals. I think you have hit a very positive note there.

Mr. Brown: I must admit it is borrowed from one of the journals I was reading when preparing this document last year. I borrowed that from a schoolteacher whose name is Alice Kelleher. She was a schoolteacher for about 60 years. Her argument was, "Back to basics, I have heard it

for 60 years. Let's go forward instead of backward." I sort of incorporated that into our presentation.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We will go to questions now. Mr. Reycraft.

Mr. Reycraft: Thank you, Mr. Brown, for coming before us. Does the system in which you teach still use retention?

Mr. Brown: The system in which I teach uses retention in the smallest measure possible.

Mr. Reycraft: What does that mean?

Mr. Brown: That means that everything is done to encourage the children to learn what they have to learn, and if they do not, they are put on, but they get the remedial help they need. That is the difference. I do not personally agree with, and I do not think the system I work for agrees with, putting children on and just letting them sit there or not attending to the skills that they need to learn. That is the point.

Mr. Reycraft: Are you satisfied that this system does what you have suggested about using alternative learning strategies and remediation to help those youngsters so that they are not in that same situation at the end of the next year?

Mr. Brown: Yes, I am. It does work.

Mr. Reycraft: Because?

Mr. Brown: Because the system is such that you can have a child identified who has these special learning needs. You can get all kinds of support services. People come in to help you with the child. The child is identified, placed in an appropriate program and the problem is dealt with.

Mr. Reycraft: Generally, are you satisfied that those students' progress does change significantly as a result of that attention?

Mr. Brown: I would say that those students do learn what they have to learn. It takes them a longer amount of time than some other students. The point is, what do we do with students who cannot learn what they need to learn in a certain amount of time, however arbitrary it is? I was listening to one of the earlier presentations in which they were talking about the semester system. It is the same kind of thing. What do you do with a student who does not learn X in the set amount of time? Do you keep him back until he does or do you let him go forward and keep working with him until he does?

1720

Mr. Reycraft: So almost all the students in your system graduate after nine years in the elementary panel?

Mr. Brown: For the most part. In the system I am employed by, we also have a program for students who have repeated, usually elsewhere, to make up the lost time. It is a tough program. They have to work harder, but if they can do it they are permitted to make up that lost year.

Mr. Reycraft: What kind of resource personnel or other classroom assistance do you have available to you in working with these youngsters?

Mr. Brown: We have a group of psychologists available for testing purposes, we have learning-disabled classes and behavioural classes. We have all kinds of support services available to us in terms of other teachers who will provide extra help. There is a process to go through; I am sure you are familiar with the identification and placement review committee process. We go through that process and do the best we can for the individual child.

Mr. Reycraft: Simply having or using the IPRC process does not assure children in all systems that they get the attention they need, that they are as successful as it sounds like they are in your system. I am certainly sympathetic to the position you put forward. We have heard from those, however, who claim that in their system the resources simply are not adequate and, as a result, students cannot be helped in the same way, cannot be brought up to the standard within the same amount of time. I am glad to hear it is not that way where you are.

Mr. Brown: It is not that way where I work. The situation in question is not where I work, but we will not get into that.

Mr. Keyes: Along the same lines, I just wonder whether you work in a private or a public system.

Mr. Brown: I work in a public system.

Mr. Keyes: On the resource side of it, does the school make fair use of volunteers, through parents and others, as well?

Mr. Brown: Indeed.

Mr. Keyes: That is one of the areas of compensating for the lack of government-funded resources within any school. It is available to the majority of them. Do you use a fair amount of it for this very thing?

Mr. Brown: The board I work for does use parent volunteers. That is organized strictly on a school basis.

Mr. Keyes: But it is there. My point is that they do form part of that remediation type of program perhaps, right?

Mr. Brown: Yes.

Mr. Keyes: To what extent do you have research to show that retention is used significantly in the province? I spent a lot of years in teaching and I would not think that in my 37 years I ever retained one per cent of them.

Mr. Brown: There is little research supporting—

Mr. Keyes: I am just wondering if what you are putting up here is a bogymen, because your whole emphasis is mainly on the retention factor. I guess I would challenge whether or not there is much of it. I do not know that we have, Mrs. O'Neill, through the ministry, any stats on that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Ask for it.

Mr. Brown: Yes, that would be interesting. My purpose in being here on behalf of the parents is to express to you our concern that retention not be incorporated into any new plan that this committee recommends or the government gets into as some sort of cure-all. "These kids don't know what they are supposed to know. Let's keep them back until they do." I am hearing that these days, I am hearing people say, "Let's go back to doing that." Radwanski says it, but he does not say it outright. He says, "Give them help, and after the help, if they still cannot do it, then retain them." I have read Mr. Radwanski's report, and there are some good things in it and some things I do not like. I am sure everybody can say that.

Mr. Keyes: Probably you would have heard it also from just the last delegation, in essence, which really said, "We must have province-wide standards in the core subjects that do not vary anywhere across this whole province." I am sorry I did not have a chance to ask that question. That is totally unrealistic.

I was wondering, just as a final question which is still related to this, is the matter of retention of students the major concern of the group of parents you represent? I commend you for coming together.

Mr. Brown: It caused us to form our group last year, because of local concerns. We were met with, as far as we were concerned, the classic case of—how can I put it—retention in excess. Now you are going to define "excess" again, as you mentioned in the previous commentary.

Mr. Keyes: I hope, finally, that your committee will continue to function as a group of concerned parents, but then maybe your scope will broaden out to some of the other issues. I agree that if I saw retention in any system that I was in, I would be concerned about it. There are

many other greater concerns I have about the system, but if it stemmed from particular incidents, that is fine. Having brought you together, I hope your group will direct its attention to and even continue in this whole issue of education.

Mr. Brown: It is broadening at this moment, I can assure you.

Mr. Keyes: Good.

Mrs. O'Neill: May I have a supplementary? It is directly on that.

Madam Chairman: As long as it is not as multifaceted as Mr. Keyes's.

Mrs. O'Neill: No, I promise I will not do that.

Mr. Keyes: I have had a lot of practice with six weeks of Sunday shopping and definitions of "reasonable," "tourism" and a few other things.

Madam Chairman: Good work. You have all your questions.

Mrs. O'Neill: I know you do not want to say too much about this parent group, but it certainly is a fascinating reason to come together. Were the parents across the spectrum of the grade structure or was it just one group of parents on one grade?

Mr. Brown: I do not want to get too much into the statistics that we gathered. It was unscientific door-knocking and so on. Our findings were skewed primarily in the primary division. We felt that there was a pattern. This was not necessarily the case, but from what we could find, little boys in grade 2 were failing. That is what we found.

Mrs. O'Neill: This group is confined to one area of one city, and you are continuing to meet.

Mr. Brown: Indeed.

Mrs. O'Neill: Have you worked with the administration of the schools that you represent and has it had any effect? I guess what I want to know is, are you still out there or have you begun to work where the problem could be solved?

Mr. Brown: We are beginning to work where the problem can be solved.

Mrs. O'Neill: And you are getting the kinds of communication that you need to work together on solving what could become a community concern.

Mr. Brown: It has taken some time, but I think we are making progress, yes.

Madam Chairman: I believe, way back when, Mr. Johnston was next on the list.

Mr. Keyes: He has been learning by our questions.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Exactly.

Madam Chairman: He has been extremely gracious in allowing a number of supplementaries in between.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Once one's spleen is vented, he calms right down at the end of the day.

I remember this problem and this whole concern that was being raised about schools starting to try to develop standards, even with the elementary panel; that seemed to indicate that retention was therefore going to be part of the message that was being sent out, and some pretty horrific numbers in terms of kids who were being held back. I guess what I am interested in knowing is sort of what you were just alluding to at the end. What is the process here? As I understand it, there is nothing that stops teachers, with the principal, deciding that somebody is going to be held back.

What is there as a mechanism for a parent—in this case, it had to be a group of parents that actually got together—to do something about this? It is certainly not within the intent of ministry documents, the kind of process that should be followed. I think Mr. Keyes's point is good on that. It is not even the general practice within the system. It is both the philosophy and the practice to think of social promotion as important. What has to be done? What are the mechanisms for parents to be able to draw attention to the fact that there is an abnormal situation taking place here?

In your case, as I recall, it was just a freaky thing of a couple of parents starting to talk and understanding that their children had been held back or hearing that another child had. They started to phone around, and it was only then that the extent of the problem really became known.

Mr. Brown: That is essentially what happened; but if you want to get at the cause, it is, let's say, lack of parental input or lack of concern for parental opinion. That is the breakdown in communication. I think that is the root problem. And a certain degree of philosophy that I do not agree with, as I tried to outline in there, the philosophy that they will learn it in the second year. Whether or not they need a second year to learn it. Some children will, if you give them enough help, learn it during the one year—maybe they will learn it in the first three months of the year after—but whether they need a whole year doing the same thing, I do not think so.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is a subject for another time for us in terms of the role of parents in the school system, but structurally what do we need there? An aggressive parent will go in and fight

for that kid once he learns about it, and the more articulate the parent and the more power strings he can pull, the more he will be able to effect that. What kind of parental involvement are you talking about; formally?

Mr. Brown: There is a chain. You can go to the principal, you can go to the superintendent of schools, you can go to the director, you can go to the board. Beyond that, I guess you can take your problem to the ministry. If you are rebuffed at every turn, you go as far as you have to if you are determined that your cause is just or correct or whatever.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I guess I was leading more to the question of, to avoid this happening, do we need to have a different structure within the schools for the role of parents? It seems to me what we have at the moment is higher parental involvement at the elementary panel than the secondary panel, but with no formal powers in terms of what parents can actually accomplish. The school council notion, of which there are very few cases in the whole province, is not something which is endorsed by legislation or promoted within school boards.

I was just wondering to what degree you thought parental involvement should be structurally established in a local school to make sure that policies, like this kind of retention policy which was antithetical to what the parents wanted, could not be inflicted upon a school by a principal, a group of teachers or whatever.

Mr. Brown: It has been my experience that most schools in 1988 are on the lines of what you are thinking. The parents are involved, the parents are consulted, the decision to retain or promote is discussed. People in my group were telling us they were being told that such was not the case. That kind of solid approach is what motivated them to take some sort of action, because they could not get through to be involved as part of it. They were just told what was going to be done and that was that.

I do not think this is rampant. I do not want anybody on the committee to believe that we feel that way, but we have a sense that there are leanings, with Radwanski and a couple of other things, to move in this direction, go towards it a little bit. We do not think that is a particularly good idea, especially at the elementary panel. We can say that because we have felt its effects.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Keep them longer and the school will be prolonged for a few years.

Mr. Brown: That is the ironic thing, because this is not in an area of declining enrolment that

this occurred. You would think they would be happy to.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Brown, for coming before us today. You have certainly provided us with the most in-depth conversation around retention and grade promotion to date. Personally, I have found it very helpful.

Mr. Brown: I am delighted. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: The select committee on education stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The committee adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

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Wernick, Morris

Muter, Mary

Brereton, Mary

Colapinto, Margaret

Musselman, Sue

From the Ministry of Education:

Lipischak, William P., Director, Program Implementation and Review Branch, Learning Services Division

From the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario:

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Vandervan, Tony, Faculty, Canadian Reformed Teachers' College

Hughes, Diana, Educational Consultant

Struik, Agnes, Educational Consultant

From the Mississauga Board of Trade:

McCaskill, Dr. David G., Director

Leamy, Adam, Director of Policy and Research

Individual Presentation:

Brown, Robert M.



No. E-15

Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Organization of the Education Process



First Session, 34th Parliament

Thursday, September 15, 1988

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday, September 15, 1988

The committee met at 10:12 a.m. in room 151.

ORGANIZATION

Madam Chairman: Good morning. Welcome to this morning's hearings of the select committee on education. Just before we begin with our formal presentations, I have several announcements to make.

Members have been given a number of exhibits this morning by the clerk. I would mention that these are written exhibits only and will not have oral presentations to accompany them. The other announcement is that it appears there may be some changes to the Ottawa agenda, so we will keep members advised as the changes occur.

Today you will be receiving from the clerk a travel pack which includes not only your agendas for next week but also your tickets. At this time I would like to outline the travel schedule that we will be following over the next few weeks. As members realize, today's hearings are televised, so this is a good opportunity to let people in the various areas know that we are coming to visit them.

On Monday, September 19, we will be going to Ottawa. The hearings will take place at the Delta hotel starting at 10 o'clock, I believe.

Clerk of the Committee: Ten thirty.

Madam Chairman: At 10:30, sorry. They will continue on Tuesday, September 20, starting at 10 o'clock. We will then go for the next day, Wednesday, September 21, to Sudbury, and hearings will begin at 10 o'clock at the Peter Piper Inn. We come back to Toronto for Thursday, September 22.

On Monday, September 26, we will be going to Windsor, meeting at 10 o'clock at the Hilton hotel. Tuesday and Wednesday we are back in Toronto in committee room 1 to conduct our hearings here. On Thursday, September 29, we will be going to Thunder Bay to the Valhalla Inn. Hearings will begin there at 10 o'clock in the morning. We do hope that people across Ontario will be able to take some time out of their busy schedules to join us.

I will now open up this morning's hearings.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: On a point of order: It relates to the role of the committee and my concerns about just how relevant this committee

is going to be and what kind of actual focus and outcome we can expect from the committee when our mandate is as big as it is.

Ironically, yesterday when Mr. McBurney from the Ontario Association of Alternative and Independent Schools was saying that he wanted us to be reconstituted to deal with some of his concerns, I said that our mandate is broad enough for us to deal with whatever we choose and we do not need to be reconstituted. Looking at this morning's papers, I began to wonder if in fact we do not need a major reconstitution when we come back and some much clearer idea from the government of what this committee should be doing than we have had up to this point.

I understand the difficulty that the minister has in the sense that we have been given a mandate basically to deal with anything in education that we decide to deal with. He has to be minister and has to make some decisions about education as things go on. But it is a little problematic for us as a committee, it seems to me, to deal with issues like streaming and then to see the opinions of the minister in the press or hear them on the radio before they have been shared with the committee. We do not really have a clear idea of how much of what he is saying is actual government policy at this point and how much is just conjecture and thinking out loud on his part, which is a legitimate thing to do.

We then see that one of the issues that we have put off for this time, but which we are going to deal with in the near future, around standardized testing—and it comes up with many of our delegations—has some fairly definitive statements attributed to the minister as of his speech yesterday.

There are just two things I would like to suggest. First, as a member of the opposition here, it is not my opinion that my role is to be a public relations front man for the government and to deal with issues in a public hearing sense of surveying what people are thinking about while the government is already developing its policy. That is not something which I consider a very useful function for me. If I want to learn about some of these issues and canvass these opinions from associations like those that are coming before us today, I can do that on my own as critic. I would prefer to do it that way rather

than with the constraints of a select committee if, in fact, the government is working on some of these specific problems.

What I would like to say is that I think we need to ask the government to come up with a much clearer idea of what it expects from this committee than it has done to this point and to have that presented to the House when we reconvene in October. We cannot be in the position of launching ourselves off to deal with standardized testing, just as an example, in January, which would be a possibility and a possible outcome of the way we have organized ourselves up to this point, and then find that the government has already developed policy on it in the meantime. Our role then changes.

If it requires legislation to bring in the changes the government wants, then that would be something which would naturally come to a standing committee to deal with. If it is not something that demands changes, then what is our role and, I would ask, what is the role of the Liberal members of this committee in then second-guessing their own government and holding hearings on something that has just been decided upon? I think we are in an invidious kind of position.

1020

There are surely things we can deal with in this committee on which the minister does not have to make major public statements, or he can say that they are in the process of making decisions and will make those after they hear from the committee, that kind of statement, without putting us in a position which I find, frankly, a little embarrassing, a little aggravating as well.

I do not know what the opinion of the committee is, but I would like to recommend that we do two things. One is to request that the minister not make statements that seem to be outlining policy opinions of a minister, because he has some major responsibility for things he says as minister, on the specific subjects we are dealing with at this stage, to give us the courtesy of at least giving us his opinions first, or not sharing them with segments of the public for us then to read about in the papers while we are meeting. He can at least hold them until the day after we meet.

The other would be to make a formal request to the minister and the government House leader that they think seriously about what our mandate should be for the next period of time, that they look at the way we have segregated out the various subject areas, the way we have looked at that already, the discussions we have had about

that, and then look at what their actual plans are and decide how much of that is really what a select committee should be dealing with and how much of this stuff, which the government itself is going to be acting on in the meantime, a standing committee might more appropriately deal with once the government has done that.

I feel that if we do not do that, I will be advising my leader that I do not see any particular role for our caucus to be playing on this committee, because I do not want to be seen to be in the position of flacking for the government, quite frankly, or holding meaningless meetings that will be irrelevant to groups like this, which are coming before us, as well as to myself. They would be much better spending their time talking directly with the minister, if he is already in the process of making policy decisions in some of these areas, than they would be coming to talk to us about their views on these matters when we will not have any power.

Those would be my two requests, that we ask the one matter of courtesy at this stage from the minister and that we get some much more clear idea from the government about what it sees the role of this committee to be rather than the very broad-ranging mandate we have at this point.

Madam Chairman: I think what I would like to do at this stage is canvass the other members of the committee.

Mr. Reycraft: What I hear Mr. Johnston saying is that he wants two things to happen: He wants the Legislature to put forward a more specific mandate for this select committee; and second, he would like the Ministry of Education to sort of put on hold, to go into carbon freeze on those specific areas that are to be included within that mandate.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is balderdash. It was announced in the throne speech.

Mr. Reycraft: I really cannot support either of those positions. The first thing I want to remind Mr. Johnston of is that this is a select committee of the Legislature. It is not a committee of the Ministry of Education, it is not a committee for the Ministry of Education, nor should the members of this committee expect the ministry simply to put on hold everything that is being dealt with by this committee. The ministry has to go on with its business.

If we need information from the ministry about announcements such as have been reported in today's Toronto Star, then we can have officials of the ministry, the minister himself and the parliamentary assistant here respond to those matters to give us additional information. But I

do not think we should start to look at this committee as being something that is closely affiliated with the Ministry of Education.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Well, that is the problem.

Mr. Jackson: You just hit it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You hit it right on the head.

Mr. Reycraft: Obviously, we need to get information from them, we need to be providing advice to them, but we do not avoid dealing with issues that are currently being acted on by the ministry, nor should the ministry have to avoid dealing with matters before this committee while we are dealing with them.

On the other matter, a more specific mandate, frankly I reject what Mr. Johnston is suggesting as well. I appreciate the fact that the mandate from the Legislature was quite general, that it allowed the committee to order its own business, to make its decisions as to which matters it wished to study. I have no wish to go back to the Legislature to try to get that mandate reduced in any way. I want to see the committee retain its freedom, its flexibility to determine the issues that it wants to study.

Mr. Jackson: My concerns, I guess, rest somewhere in the middle of the two statements made by the Liberal Party representative and the representative of the New Democratic Party, Mr. Reycraft and Mr. Johnston.

I do not think we can inhibit in any way the minister's comments, nor do I think it would be appropriate that we even suggest that. I guess the concerns I have fall within the area of why we have a political committee. I mean, let's not forget that this committee was born out of a throne speech in the mind's eye of the Premier (Mr. Peterson) closely following the election of a tremendous majority government. There is sufficient suspicion around whether or not this committee is just going through the motions or whether or not the ministry is in a position to take substantively the kinds of concerns and recommendations we make.

This is now perhaps the third incident, in my view, which would indicate to me that this is a totally political exercise. I want to make it clear. I want to separate the difference between the right of the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward) to continue to fine-tune and to reform the education system. It is separate and distinct from the mandate that the Premier set down for this committee.

Quite frankly, I feel that we are going to take three, four or five years to complete this general mandate in the midst of its being totally unco-ordinated with some sort of government policy or program or respect for the work of all members of this committee and the public who come before us.

There are two members of the governing party who have served in the minority government. They have a better feel for how committees operate and the way in which the agenda, which was given by the Legislature, is to come back to the Legislature. Quite frankly, it just is not here. I do not expect the new members of the governing party to appreciate more seriously the kinds of points that Mr. Johnston and I are trying to raise.

I am extremely disappointed that there is this dysfunction. I know the parliamentary assistant would like to speak. I seriously doubt that she was even privy to this information. Perhaps she would like to set the record straight. But I just see the government not taking seriously the activity and the potential that this committee could report back to the government.

For my part, I too would have to approach my party leader to suggest that the limited resources which both opposition parties have might be better attributed to an issue in which the government fully intends to listen to the activities of that committee. Those are clearly documented.

There are committees of which the government has said we truly need input through public discussion and through the collective efforts of all the members of this House. But we are not getting that message on this committee; it is blatantly obvious.

I would not support the first part of Mr. Johnston's recommendation, but I certainly would recommend some informal discussions with the minister, not on camera, to determine just to what extent we are a relief valve for some problem areas in education, or we are taking seriously the kinds of presentations and the effort that several hundred people in this province will be making before this committee in the course of the next few years. I think it is fair to them. I think it is also equally fair to all members of this committee.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I do not think the request that Mr. Johnston is making is outrageous or should be responded to in such a defensive way by government members.

Basically, all we are saying is that if the minister were to give us a list of things that are already being proceeded with by the ministry and

that he does not need our input on or does not want our input on because they are proceeding, then we will not waste our time or give the impression to delegations that they are going to have input through this committee on the development of that government policy.

That is all we are asking. Let's not waste our time. I am not sure, Madam Chairman, whether you know off the top of your head what the budget for this committee is. I forget, but it must be a few hundred thousand dollars.

Madam Chairman: Around \$200,000, I believe.

1030

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Yes, \$200,000 for this little segment, or this year, and then a couple of hundred thousand more. There is a lot of money being spent on this committee, plus research assistants and money from the clerk's office and so forth to staff this committee. Let's not be silly about this and start studying things that the government is already proceeding on if it does not need our input. That is all we are asking. Let's ask the minister for a list of things that he does not want our input on because they are already proceeding, and we will stay clear of those.

I think yesterday's comments by the minister were inappropriate. I can only gather that the parliamentary assistant did not know about these comments being made, because we had a delegation in front of us yesterday talking about testing. There was support for the current system of testing in the schools expressed in a report by one of the ministry staff, asked for by this committee as to what the status quo is, because the parliamentary assistant and others, including myself, were expressing support for the way it is, not major changes. I assume that even the parliamentary assistant did not know what the Minister of Education was about to do.

Just out of courtesy, out of proper expenditure of taxpayers' money, which I am very concerned about, let's make sure that this committee is not duplicating what the ministry is already going to do. Let's just ask the minister to give us a list of things that he does not want the committee to provide recommendations on because he plans to proceed more quickly than we are going to be able to do.

I think it is a legitimate, reasonable request. We can talk later about the terms of reference of the committee. One of the difficulties with terms of reference for a select committee under any circumstances is that your terms of reference are usually only significant the day they are debated

in the Legislature. After that, the committees pretty much decide what they are going to do in any case.

I am not as concerned about the terms of reference as I am about a little bit of courtesy and respect for the system coming from the Minister of Education. That would be, in my view, a significant achievement for this government, which daily is beginning to demonstrate its arrogance to the committees of this Legislature.

Mrs. O'Neill: It is true that I did not know the contents of the speech that was delivered yesterday by Mr. Ward. I did know where he was speaking. I do feel it is rather premature for us to judge all of whatever was said at the faculty of education yesterday by newspaper and television reports.

I do think from what I read in the paper—and I have not yet seen the speech—it is a continuum of what was said by ministry officials and what I was trying, in my way, to say was going on in the ministry. I think even if you read the report in the paper, it does suggest that this will be built upon the provincial reviews. I think there is a lot of hype on this particular issue right now, because it is certainly an issue that is being discussed generally by the public. That is what I would like to say about that.

I have another concern, and I have had it and I have not expressed it to this moment. The mandate of this committee has never been stated by anyone, other than some members of this committee, to be a three- to five-year possibility. I got nervous when I heard the number three; now I am hearing five. The Legislature gave us a mandate and we were to report by December, as I understand. I think that is certainly the understanding of other members of the Legislature. I find it very difficult to talk to that more extended time line. I feel very strongly, having worked with all of the people in the ministry, that it would be impossible to keep everything on hold for an extended period of time such as we are speaking about.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: That is not the suggestion.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay, maybe I am misunderstanding. I think this is certainly an area of great misunderstanding at the moment. I think we will have to clarify some of those things among ourselves and perhaps with the people in the ministry, who again, I remind you, tend to be—the minister himself has said to me and I am sure he has said it publicly—at arm's length from this committee, and he wants to maintain that.

Let's try to be as positive as we can in how we will solve what I consider is somewhat of a

misunderstanding and try to work our way out of it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If I might, I will make a response and raise this matter. There are a couple of things.

The first is, of course, that we may not know whether we are going to be existing for three years, five years, whatever. We continue at the will of the Legislature—in this case, the majority government—which is the way it works. If you look at the agenda that you and I and the others worked on and the matters we are going to deal with, I defy any of us to think we are going to deal with that, because we work only between sessions and by the time we get out of here this fall I do not think that is realistic. Therefore, looking at the things we were trying to say needed to be dealt with, as we broke them down, we had a shopping list that would be very difficult to accomplish within anything less than a few years of work.

What I am suggesting, as Mr. Cooke says, is that we really need to know what it is we can concentrate on that is useful for us to do. If the ministry is already very clearly along the road to deciding where it wants to go on standardized testing, as the minister seems to indicate he is, in terms of benchmarks versus the old approach of exams province-wide, that is just great, but let's not spend a lot of time talking about it. That is all I am trying to say.

I am concerned that we do things that are useful and practical for us, because we are all very busy people who could be doing an awful lot of other things which would also be useful to Ontario. I just want to have a better idea, as Mr. Cooke says, of what is useful for us to deal with, what is going to be just a matter of our own personal education and edification and what will really not have any effect on what the government is up to because it is already along the road in terms of decisions.

There are a number of major issues for which the timing is really crucial; for instance, the funding of education. If the government is coming out with something at the end of the year, as is rumoured, on that kind of matter, then this would have been not a bad time for us to have had some kind of discussion in general terms about the issue, or we could be given the duty later on of looking at the government's analysis and bringing forward the people at that time to talk about what it is.

It would be terribly wrong if we were in the middle of discussions on funding in January, as the next thing we decided to deal with, and the

government came out with its announcement in the middle of all that. It would be an affront to anybody who came before us as well as a really difficult thing for us to deal with. I am just saying there is too much confusion out there.

On the second thing, I am not saying the minister cannot talk—clearly, that is not what I was trying to say—but if the minister is going to make statements on issues we are dealing with, as he seemed to be unwilling to do when he was sitting with us in the philosophy portion of this back in July, then I think we deserve, as the Legislature deserves, to receive that information as he is doing it so we have an idea what his opinions are or so that he does not make any definitive statements until such time as we have completed at least the hearing process of this. That is all.

I do not think those things are unreasonable. If there is no agreement on that, then clearly I think we as a caucus will have to make a fairly serious decision about whether or not we are going to participate after this section of hearings.

Mr. Reyecraft: Just on one point, and perhaps I am being more specific than I need to be this morning, but Mr. Johnston has again raised the matter of standardized testing as if the minister had said something yesterday about standardized testing that was inappropriate.

As I read Mr. Contenta's article in the Toronto Star, all the minister was doing yesterday was defending what is existing government policy. He said the province would not conduct province-wide standardized testing to find out whether or not the elementary school standards are being met. There is nothing new in that. There is no change in direction by the minister. It would be ridiculous to think the minister would do anything other than defend existing ministry policy in his speeches, now or at any time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Look at the other side of it; that is actually what the present streaming policy is. You cannot have it both ways. He is making a position clear which is something which we supposedly were going to discuss. If it is such established policy that he is going to make definitive statements on something like standardized testing, then we should certainly drop that from our agenda. It should certainly not be something we should bother taking our time to discuss, if it were on our list of things we were going to do. That is all I am saying.

Let's be very clear about what is useful for us to do and what the ministry does not need us to do because it has already decided that the present approach to standardized testing and benchmarks

and that kind of thing is where it is going to go and that is it. If that is what is it, then I can attack it as a critic if I choose to, but there is certainly no point for an all-party committee to be sitting here discussing it.

1040

Mr. Reyecraft: I want to mention two things. First, I am not aware that standardized testing is one of the items currently under consideration by this select committee. We have four very specific things we are looking at. Standardized testing is not one of those.

Second, until the minister decides there is to be a change in policy, I would fully expect that in his speeches, in his public remarks, he defends the existing government policy. There is nothing unusual about that.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Not only did he defend it; he said that was it, there were going to be no changes, period; that is it. That is fine; I happen to agree with him on that. All we are saying is let's write him a letter and ask on which areas there are going to be announcements made or on which the definitive government policy will be announced shortly or in the next period of time, and let's stay clear of those so we do not waste our time or people's time by having them before this committee. It is simple. I do not think it is a particularly partisan or silly request.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We could actually have people coming before us two or three times in the course of a year if we are not careful about that. If, for instance—let's use this as an example because it is not real—we left standardized testing as we were planning to originally in this fall session and we were dealing with it now and people came before us, as some people are anyway, and talked about it, then the government makes an announcement about a major change it wishes and puts out a major white paper on it and that gets referred out to us by the House to deal with, then the same people come back three months later on exactly what they wanted to talk about in the first place.

We should be very careful about how we use our time because we have very limited time to operate as a select committee. There are a huge number of issues to be dealt with. I think the use of half an hour now to discuss this is not such a bad idea, so that we do not waste our time dealing with things two or three times, as we may end up doing, but deal with things appropriate for us to deal with. That is all.

Madam Chairman: As you mentioned, we have spent a half an hour discussing it. The only

one I see who has not yet spoken who has indicated a desire to is Mr. Mahoney. If we could hear Mr. Mahoney, then perhaps we can reach some consensus at that stage.

Mr. Mahoney: In a truly nonpartisan spirit, I do not hear a lot of offensive requests coming. Maybe the steering committee could take some time and we could get back to our agenda because we are 45 minutes off and we are going to be setting ourselves behind the eight ball. As a member of the Legislature supporting the government—which I think is the appropriate way of putting it as opposed to “a government member”—I would be upset to see a major white paper come out dealing with items this select committee is dealing with. I think any of us would be.

Having said that, we are not about to muzzle the minister. I do not think that is the intent. Maybe you could have a meeting of your steering committee in private and discuss the matter further and come up with some kind of plan.

Madam Chairman: I was going to suggest something of that nature. We will at that stage have the transcript from Hansard. All three parties at this stage have basically put their positions on the record and to keep going on at this particular stage may not be that fruitful. The steering committee can perhaps meet and decide whether it wants to send a copy of Hansard to the minister and ask for his comments. We may like to have a time line. If that is agreeable to the parties here, that is what I would propose.

We have had the Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology very patiently waiting now for 45 minutes. I do not want to muzzle the discussion but I would prefer that we perhaps have a steering committee meeting and at least have a preliminary discussion of where to go from here and bring it back to the committee.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: As long as it is in the next day or two; today or tomorrow.

Madam Chairman: Perhaps if it is acceptable, we could have a steering committee meeting at noon today. Mr. Jackson indicates that would not be good timing. It also may be very difficult as we are running quite late today.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Maybe we can do it while we are on the road.

Mr. Jackson: That would be great; at 12,000 feet on our way to Ottawa. If there were any argument, no one could leave.

Madam Chairman: That is true.

Mr. Keyes: You would not get sore?

Mr. Jackson: I never do.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is not necessarily true.

Mr. Reycraft: It is not true.

Madam Chairman: I know we have such dedicated members of the committee that when we are in Ottawa we would not mind sitting over lunch and perhaps hammering out a few of these differences and perhaps a few similarities. With that, I think we will leave that particular issue until the steering committee has met.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: I would now like to go back to the agenda. I am not sure I can go back, because we have never been there, but we can continue our discussion of streaming, semestering, OSIS and grade promotion.

Gentlemen, I hope we have not frightened you off too much or into thinking that your comments will not be listened or adhered to by either the committee members or the ministry. I suspect that one of the major accomplishments of the committee to date is that a lot of these issues are being aired, both in the press and in our committee meetings, and people are once again thinking about education issues. I, for one, think our committee does have a very valid mandate and may be extremely effective in advice to the ministry. I certainly hope so.

Anyway, with that, I welcome the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario. Would you introduce yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard? We have allocated one hour for both your oral presentation and questions from the members, so I would ask that you allow sufficient time at the end for the questioning.

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY OF ONTARIO

Mr. Gordon: My name is Robert Gordon. I am the president of Humber College. My colleague is Dr. Graham Collins, who is the executive director of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario. We would like to make some verbal comment and then, as you suggest, handle any questions which may arise.

If I may start, I guess I would introduce in some sort of broad context two points. I apologize to the committee in so far as I will probably deliver my remarks in machine-gun-technique fashion, but I think you would agree

that, with the paucity of time, maybe that is not too bad.

First, we live in a changing economic and social environment, which is rather passé now but something to which we still have to find solutions. Canada needs a productive, sophisticated workforce, I believe, if we are going to ensure our international competitiveness and our quality of life, which I think we have taken for granted. Canada also lags behind in adapting in that field, despite good times. It is by no means sure where we can stand in that contest which will emanate from competition with Japan, the United States, etc.

We believe education, as I think you would agree, is the key; both a basic grounding, which I think is more the subject of this committee, and lifelong education, which is obviously of great concern to us. We, of course, want confident, productive citizens who can presumably pay taxes and therefore have their dignity and confidence, rather than those who must survive on unemployment, welfare and other social safety nets that are excellent if needed, but not necessarily desirable.

I think we are fooling ourselves if students are not prepared. A soft education, if I can put it that way, is not the answer, nor is elitist education. What we believe is that we need prescriptive education which will allow individuals to proceed at their own pace to maximize their potential and therefore cover all citizens.

The second point is that we appreciate that this committee deals primarily with secondary and elementary school education, but we do not think these can be dealt with in isolation any more. First of all, most of the students—in fact all of them by definition—are where we get our students. Second, as you can appreciate, a large percentage of school students are not completing satisfactorily their high school graduation, but indeed do come to us later on, through upgrading and other types of programs which in late bloomers or secondary capacity hopefully allows them to become productive citizens.

I might mention also that we believe the colleges are in some respects the best-kept secret in Ontario education. There are reasons for that. Most decision-makers and bureaucrats went to university, as did teachers. We have something over 100,000 full-time students every year, we have something over 750,000 part-time students every year and we have 94 campuses in this province. It can be seen that we are playing a rather significant role, I believe, in education. We are very concerned. While we would not set

ourselves up as experts on the Ontario school system, obviously, we are quite concerned with what happens there.

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At Humber, which I know more intimately, we have done some institutional research on our freshmen, particularly those coming from the Ontario secondary schools. The profile seems to suggest that the average age is still about 19-plus years of age, mostly coming directly from secondary schools. While some literature would suggest that the community college student is getting older, the full-time ones in Ontario still seem to be primarily teenaged or late adolescent.

Second, which is more important, 30 per cent are not sure of their careers; 25 per cent are deficient in reading and mathematics; 28 per cent are deficient in mathematics; and 30 per cent have no time-management skills.

This is not any great news to most of you I suspect. The importance is that all those data were self-reported. The students, in our view, therefore, were asking for help rather than trying to hide this fact. More significant, as you well know, we are talking about the cream of the crop in the sense that 35 per cent of the secondary school graduates in this province are the ones who go to college and universities. Two thirds do not, at least not at the initial stage.

I can only draw two conclusions from those data. The first is that we need a core curriculum featuring reading, writing and mathematics skills, etc., which are absolutely essential to success at the college level and anywhere else. Second, the use of educational technology—computers—and language skills, which are not only French quite obviously in this country, but Spanish and Chinese, are extremely important if we are going to survive in the global village and the shrinking world. Of course, there are the humanities and social sciences for responsible citizenship, adaptability to change, thinking, logic, etc.

Second, the students have individual differences which require individual solutions and prescriptions. College-level students are so different at their learning levels. It is quite obvious, since they all come from the secondary schools, that there must be wide variation in their capacity and attainment at the other level.

As regards the issues that you have raised in your letter, there were four precise items. I would just like to speak quickly about streaming and then the other three. Streaming has to occur to some degree but not in the traditional way which

separates the haves from the have-nots, if I can put it that way.

The democratic potential of mixing everyone together is ultimately lost through those with lower academic capability losing confidence and the gifted ones finding that their classes are reduced to the lowest common denominator, which was a statement in the Star's report.

I believe that mastery learning of the competencies is critical, but the different rates of time for each student are necessary. Every student, for example, cannot complete eight years of reading in eight years. It is as simple as that. Positive streaming, subject by subject, is necessary to handle individual differences, remedies and enrichment for each.

More important, the introduction of educational technology, which we are now bringing on line more and more, is going to allow us to accomplish these goals. It is going to require a significant change by the educators and maybe by the Legislature in terms of funding allocation. Ultimately, it should not be more expensive, but it will change the way we do business, which will allow each student's program to be individually customized, if I can put it that way, so that we can deal with individual self-paced instruction.

The downside of streaming is that career paths have always been forced far too early. I think that is a foolish position in our society where late bloomers are very much possible. College, which we happen to know better than some, is a ground where people can come at much later periods of life without any particular academic credentials or attainment at secondary school and do very well.

By that I mean basic-stream students, who traditionally have been written off in terms of their capacity for post-secondary education, can make a comeback through specialized programs after completing some remedial work. The colleges would play quite a role in that. More important, the colleges and the universities are beginning to articulate much more closely. I believe basic-level students ultimately could even proceed on to university work.

Grade promotion: We have some concern with grade promotion, which has more than one definition, but we have some concern with grade levels as they now appear, because they differ from school to school. When we apply standardized tests, I might add, in trying to find the level of our students, it is quite clear to us that grade 12 graduates certainly do not read at grade 12 level in many cases, and it differs from school to school and person to person.

This is very frustrating for the college system because we are not funded for remedial programs, although Humber alone must spend at least \$600,000 a year on remedial work, which we scrape up from other sources. That is developmental English, math, reading, etc., which have to be given over and above the regular program in which students are registered. It is somewhat ludicrous to suggest they can take a sophisticated technology simultaneously with learning to read and numeracy skills, etc., but that is the situation in which we find ourselves. It is very costly and ultimately self-defeating for many students.

Washing the students through a system because they are getting older, however, is a copout, raises false expectations and later on someone, namely the colleges, will have to deal with it in any case, resulting in anger from the students who believe they are high school graduates and wonder why they are in this predicament, and also a loss of confidence.

The colleges are experimenting in developing much more rapid open-entry, open-graduation programs; that is, where you could start a program on any Monday, and they run all year round. I think we now have to deal with a consumer, client-based way of looking at education; that is what adults want.

It is not quite so easy in the schools, of course—in fact, maybe not desirable—but I do believe the introduction of computer-assisted instruction and computer-assisted learning should change the flavour of the rigid September-to-June way we do our business, and we should be much more flexible in our approaches.

To reiterate that point, I believe self-based, competency-based curriculum cancels grade promotion and yet allows peer group progress so that students do not feel left behind by brighter colleagues, but does allow them to attain competence rather than finding they are simply in a grade for which they are not prepared.

The colleges have reviewed the OSIS system, obviously, in the spirit and the guidelines intended. Quite generally, we think it is an excellent thing, particularly in the integration of communications, problem-solving and cohesion, which were not part of earlier curricula which transpired from the 27-plus-six system. However, we are seriously concerned with, first, the degree to which students are gravitating towards the academic stream. By that I mean the university stream.

First, I think there is a false impression that because there are fewer credits to take, suddenly

all the students in that stream are equal to the ones who traditionally were in the academic and those who were in the general. Second, I believe educators in the secondary system, for whatever reasons, have more pride in suggesting that their students are going to go to university and that nothing less would suffice; therefore, I think there is more pressure to push them in that direction. That is not bad, of course, for individuals, but I think it is not necessarily wonderful for a government which has to face economic and social engineering in the broadest context rather than, obviously, to hurt an individual. More important for us, I think it raises false expectations.

Second, we are finding that many courses which we find prerequisite for technology and other sophisticated programs in the information age simply are not being offered in the high schools. There has been an alarming dropoff in the applications to technology programs, which is somewhat contradictory to the Premier's Council and other data available, which suggest we are moving into a world which will require more and more sophisticated middle-level managers.

Also, the 30-credit program, as opposed to the 27-plus-six, is very good for the students, I suppose, in the sense that it keeps the game flexible and open, but it is a nightmare for the colleges. Not only are we now directly competing with the universities because the students apply everywhere—it is not uncommon for students to apply to six or 10 institutions to hedge their bets—but also the additional work we have in admissions, transcripts and those types of things are extremely complex because we do not have more funding to deal with that, particularly at a time when we are pressed to buy capital equipment and everything else.

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In addition to that, the proliferation of courses, which has added such things as theatre as credits at the graduation of secondary school, is very hard for us to fit out into exemptions, equivalences, etc. Of course, the students, whom we are trying to serve individually, get upset when they are not in something they believe they should be in. There is a suggestion that perhaps OSIS is too broad and that perhaps there should be a more compulsory core curriculum when all our students are in secondary school and that the universities and the colleges should be the ones which would offer the broader, specialized curriculum.

Finally, as regards semestering, we believe it works well, and there is no apparent difference in academic attainment than there was previously. However, there is no province-wide co-ordination and no critical mass, a situation which emanates from the fact that students are graduating at different times. Ironically, we have also discovered that the intake in February is almost universally from students who have not just come from high school. They have been drifting around the world or out of school. In other words, the mature students are those who tend to take the option of starting in college in February, which therefore suggests the question, what are the graduates of the high schools doing from February to September? The answer appears to be, at least in the preliminary data we have, that they are taking a longer summer than they used to. It is as simple as that, and that is not necessarily bad but it is something we should consider. It is also a period when some profitable activity could take place.

I have mentioned the processing problems, but the shortage of time between graduation and starting colleges without transcripts or grades is making it very difficult for us to place them in the appropriate program. It is very difficult in any case, because of the lack of critical mass, to duplicate programs throughout the year. As you have discovered, the universities simply are really not doing that. The colleges are struggling to try to create that or to fuse them into the regular program by September, but it is not that easy to do, given our situation.

If I might close, I would suggest five things to this committee. First, I suggest the possibility of using the February-September period as a very important period to process students through remedial activities or other types of preparatory manoeuvres which will allow them to be better prepared for full programming in the September startup.

Second, if there is to be duplication of programs there has to be better co-ordination among the colleges, so that there is the critical mass and probably more funding, because we are locked into a collective agreement, which this government, obviously, had to agree to, which puts tremendous caps on our workload and other factors relating to teaching.

Third, I submit that there should be a far greater linkage between the colleges and the secondary schools, and vice versa, not only because I believe students past a certain age just simply do not feel comfortable being in the secondary school—nor does the school board—

and would have a greater dignity and pride relating to college, but also because once you lose them it is very hard to get them back.

If you retain them, let's say, through a basic or upgrading program in the school, if the college is right there onsite at the school, as we are in the Humber colleges in the city of York, at George Harvey Collegiate Institute for one, it is far easier to have them move on immediately to a college program. Once they are out in that big city or wherever else they live, it is hard to get them back.

I believe we should be looking much more closely at the curriculum, so that the school curriculum complements and leads directly into the college one. There has not been, I must admit, perhaps because we all feel we are so very busy in our own fields, significant dialogue between those two sectors.

Fourth, I think teacher training has to take on a new complexion, not only for new teachers, who must be trained for the 21st century not cloned for the 1975 comfort, but also for in-service development, because most of our teachers in college and secondary school are not anywhere near retirement and have many productive years where they need to learn to deal with the new technology, the new way of doing things, so that we can cut costs and be more productive and more effective with each individual.

Finally, we need more exchanges of teachers at the level of college and secondary school, particularly more professional development activities together, which we at Humber are trying to do with the city of Etobicoke, but as you can appreciate, most colleges serve many school boards and many regions. We need to have more dialogue and more exchanges where college teachers teach secondary and secondary school teachers teach college in appropriate areas to enhance our understanding, to co-ordinate the curriculum and, basically, to improve a level of trust where we work together in a mutually rewarding exercise to benefit society, rather than simply saying some level of education has not done its job and that we are left to pick up the pieces.

Madam Chairman: I must say I think all members feel that the colleges' viewpoints are critical in our discussions. We have been very much looking forward to your contribution to our committee today. We will start off with Mr. Johnston, followed by Mrs. O'Neill and Mr. Jackson.

Dr. Gordon: No, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: I am sorry.

Dr. Gordon: I would like to point out that Dr. Collins has a few comments, too. Did you wish to take questions?

Madam Chairman: Oh, I apologize. I am sorry.

Dr. Gordon: I am afraid that we will be out the door without his having said anything.

Madam Chairman: We will never let that happen. Please go ahead.

Dr. Collins: Thank you very much. Perhaps I could just do a very abbreviated follow-up just to amplify a little on some of the points Dr. Gordon made, specifically in relation to OSIS.

As you are all aware, it was a process that started four or five years ago. There are quite a large number of actual curriculum guidelines and courses that are being developed by the Ministry of Education and being distributed throughout the secondary school sector that are going to have fairly significant implications, especially for the first-year courses at the college level.

I think it is fair to say the committee of presidents of the Ontario colleges in the last year and a half has really taken the initiative around trying to make sure that college staff across the 94 campuses are aware of the modifications to the curriculum. There has been an active initiative taken to make sure that staff within the college sector are aware of the changes that are occurring as a result of OSIS.

I think it is also important to point out that the initiatives at the college level tend to vary because of the complexity of the local school boards. For example, you find one college like Durham, for example, has put on a very extensive professional development workshop involving elementary, secondary and college teachers. I believe hundreds of teachers from those three different jurisdictions attended. That does not necessarily occur in every college setting across the province, but that is an example of the type of initiative that really needs encouraging and fostering as a result of the implementation of OSIS.

Another college, Sir Sandford Fleming, conducted a very extensive survey and was really involved in discussions with a wide range of secondary school people, not only at the faculty and co-ordinator level but also at the board level. As a result of that, they have a very comprehensive sense of what is really happening in the schools serving the Sir Sandford Fleming area. That is the type of initiative, again, that a number of colleges are undertaking.

It is fair to say, from a college perspective, that the secondary schools seem to be hit by quite a variety of different initiatives. If you reflect on what has been stated about the curriculum in the secondary schools in the past few months, the curriculum has to be expanded to include things like drug education, acquired immune deficiency syndrome education, requests for physical education, geography, etc. I think staff at the colleges are aware that not only do the secondary school staff have to take the guidelines as they come out, but there is a whole implementation phase in the individual boards.

As a consequence, it is difficult at this point to just identify what precise changes are going to occur, especially in relation to the freshman classes, because a lot of these curriculum guidelines are just now in the process of being distributed and implemented.

In the OSIS document, there is a section that relates to a concept called school-related packages. From the college point of view, I think that is an area where a lot more work needs to be done. The notion is that the curriculum in the secondary school can dovetail. If you study a package of courses at the secondary level in, say, the technology program area, that then can enable you to get one of three things: you could get preferred entry as a result of taking that type of program, you could get advanced standing in the college program or you could perhaps go into some sort of enriched program because of the background you have developed.

There are two colleges I could mention—Seneca, for example, has six programs for which it has developed an articulation agreement with the North York Board of Education. As I understand it, it is a written agreement. It involves programs such as electronics engineering, civil and resources engineering, office administration, travel and tourism and day care assistant. That type of model I think needs to be encouraged.

1110

From the perspective of the committee, right now colleges are doing that type of initiative basically on a volunteer basis. I am not quite sure whether there are seed funds available at some point, but even just money for coffee or for travel or for getting into discussion and dialogue, a little bit of seed support for something like that type of initiative, could go a long way to making the interface between the secondary sector and the colleges much more healthy and viable.

I think another area where the colleges are doing quite a bit of work is in trying to provide

opportunities for students who are studying basic-level courses. Six colleges or perhaps seven colleges at this point have put on and developed special programs geared more to the graduates of the basic level or graduates with primarily a basic-level sequence in their graduation certificate. It is another area where the colleges and the secondary schools could really do further development or work.

From an overall perspective, I think President Gordon mentioned that the advanced-level students seem to be well taken care of. The colleges are really focusing on playing an increased role in relation to the students taking primarily general-level courses. That is an area where the colleges, in the last two years especially, have had a reanalysis and a re-energized approach to looking at how they might provide more appropriate and tailored instruction for what is really the vast majority of students coming through the secondary school sector.

Finally, there are four specific issues which relate to OSIS and which need further encouragement in relation to secondary schools and colleges. There should be any support which can be provided for more discussion on how to make winners out of the average students as they enter college and especially in the first year of their program at the college.

There has to be more encouragement for discussion on the continuity of learning rather than segmented blocks, where it happens over here in the secondary sector and then they come to the college over here.

I think a third point is that more attention needs to be paid to the range of individual differences of the school population coming to college and more interaction between college faculty and secondary school teachers.

Those are the sorts of initiatives which from a college perspective we would really support. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Dr. Collins. Sorry to have cut you off earlier. I did not realize you were going to form part of the initial presentation. We will now go to members' questions.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you very much for the presentation. It has been very interesting to get the perspective on OSIS especially, and streaming as well, from the college perspective. I could ask so many questions but I will try to limit them to a couple.

It was the presumption, I think, in the old days that the equivalent of the general-level student would be in fact the person who would be going

to the community college and that the advanced student would be going to the university. There is a change that has taken place. I take that from your notion that you are now competing very heavily with the universities for students.

Do you have a breakdown of any sort of the people who are coming directly from high school to you, of those who are coming with the advanced standing, those with general and those with basic?

Dr. Collins: The most informed data we have suggest that the proportion of students coming through with an honours graduation diploma or part of an honours graduation diploma essentially has not changed very much from probably about 1977 through to about 1986. In other words, the proportion of students coming through with that type of background, which would mainly be advanced-level courses, has not changed very much.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is about what percentage?

Dr. Collins: I believe it is somewhere around 30 per cent or 32 per cent, either with part or full honours graduation diploma. That is becoming a little harder to track now as students come in with a combination of credits. When you look across the range of college programs at a large college like Humber College or Seneca College, you have probably 120 different programs.

What you tend to find is that in programs like, say, dental hygienist or nursing, there are many students trying to get into those programs, so students going into those programs perhaps could have one or two advanced courses as a prerequisite or required course. On the other hand, in the business programs and technology—to give just two contrasting examples—the majority of students who apply to those programs in most colleges would be accepted as long as they have the minimum entry requirements.

I think in the founding legislation, in the founding documents related to the Ontario college system, that students with either the advanced or the general level could be accepted. It has perhaps grown up over time that college is more for general rather than advanced.

Dr. Gordon: It is interesting, because I think we have to accept that we live in a credential society, not to say a greedy one, and it is quite clear that the vernacular would suggest that if you have a university degree, you are going to make more money. That is a driving force for our young people, primarily coming from their parents, whether they are rich to start with or are trying to make it from more humble beginnings.

That does not mean we have to pick up the dregs of the group, because another form of word on the street is that the type of programs that many of the colleges offer are those that are in the real job areas as opposed to the bachelor of arts.

Students are very sophisticated and what is happening is that they hedge their bets. Increasingly, more students come to us who already have BAs. It is a whole area, and we have at Humber several programs that cater precisely to those people in an accelerated fashion. We would have two programs. Let's say, in public relations, if you have the high school graduation, you take three years; if you have the BA, you take one year. That is, I think, a very interesting approach because it gives that broad education, which I think society requires for change, etc., but it also gives precise skills.

By and large, as Dr. Collins suggested, it is difficult for us in a sense, and there has been a slight decline in the college full-time enrolments in recent years. These have not only related to lower demographic data relating to births but also are because of increasing university enrolments and, I think, the phenomenon that we live in that elitist world.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One other question, just to limit myself. I know there is a great temptation to ask many, many more. Am I gathering that the creative work that is being done around making college courses relevant to high school courses and vice versa is being done after the fact of the curriculum development at the high school level, or did the colleges have a formal role at all in the curriculum development that is taking place?

Dr. Collins: The colleges were quite involved in all of the development of the curriculum through advisory committees. There are over 200 college staff on a variety of advisory committees that work with staff from the Ministry of Education and boards of education to participate in the development of the OSIS curriculum. Right now, there are in the region of 35 people still working on specific committees.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: So it was not all follow-up. That is good to know. Did the same sort of thing happen at the universities? I take as a major positive recommendation your notion of exchanges and that kind of thing at the high school level and more and more interaction there. But one also has a sense that we have two solitudes at the post-secondary level.

Dr. Gordon: We have two solitudes. More important, Ontario is the only jurisdiction in North America which does not have a transfer component to the university, which would

obviously force a relationship, an articulation of curriculum. As a result, there are two solitudes, which tend to be seen as one level; although colleges, of course, see it as a bifurcated situation where you can choose something which is equal or maybe even better. I do not think perhaps the universities see it that way.

On the other hand, just as with the school boards, increasingly more arrangements are being made, for a lot of reasons—I hope primarily because it gives an individual student more flexibility with his life, the opportunity to move into the university at some point in his future, whether it is directly after graduation or 10 years later. I can only say personally that I think that is marvellous, because what we are trying to do is maximize the potential of every citizen. If they wish to attack university and pass it, I do not see why they should be blocked because they did not initially go into it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I will leave questions for other people to ask, but so many matters have been touched on here, whether it is the core curriculum kind of process, which I would love to ask about, or whether it is individualized programming rather than streaming. It has been very helpful to us, but there are also lots of things on which we could spend a long time with you trying to ferret out more information on.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: You answered Mr. Johnston's first question about the general and advanced students. Do you have any stats on basic-level students?

Dr. Collins: Going into colleges?

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Yes.

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Dr. Gordon: I could give you a quick shot at that from Humber's experience, because we pioneered four courses. The difficulty, to be perfectly frank, is that it is very hard to get the students to come. We had a marvellous committee of high school principals from all those schools working diligently to prepare the right thing, encouragement, marketing, recruitment.

The history has been that basic students simply have not seen higher education as an option, and we are having great difficulty filling those courses. Indeed, we are looking at cancellation, because obviously we cannot run programs with five or seven students. It is not because they are going somewhere else; they are just disappearing.

Do not forget, we are dealing with Metropolitan Toronto. It may be somewhat different, but I do not see how it would be easier in a rural

setting. Quite honestly, the history is one of a debilitating lack of academic attainment, which is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Despite all the good intentions of the professional educators, to date I have to report we have not had a great deal of success. We are now analysing why not and trying to make adjustments, but the primary reason seems to me that it has just never been seen as a goal.

I am talking now about coming right out of the basic into college. We find the best way of getting them, of course, is when they have been out on the street for a while and suddenly, "Is that all there is?" if you remember the Peggy Lee song. They come back through government and other types of upgrading programs. But that is still a very difficult role, because that throws them into the problems that they have just with being adults and families, and you know it. We are not on that kick, but it is very much a factor.

Mrs. O'Neill: I want to thank you both a great deal. I have a real personal interest in the college structure and I was very glad to hear some of the specifics you mentioned.

Before I ask a specific question, you talked about two areas that I am really interested in, that is, remediation at your level and the professional development of your staff. Do you find you get direction from the Council of Regents or from your individual boards of governors on those kinds of things, or is it strictly dependent upon who happens to be the president at a given time or who happens to be chairman of a department at a given moment?

Dr. Gordon: Is this being televised?

I suggest it is probably more the latter. I think the intentions are good but, first of all, any board relies on the recommendations of policy in development of its professional staff. Bearing in mind that we do not have additional funding, whatever any college does on that has to be taken from something else. Obviously, if you can present a package to your board that covers all the bases, somewhat like a government would have to do, then you eventually announce the budget.

Of course, we try to do certain things that do not cost money. Peer tutoring is a good example of that, or maybe paying minimum recompense to very good students to help others. But, by and large, the remediation is a college-by-college thing. In effect, if you look at it by definition, it is not recognized as a problem, because everyone by definition has to have the requirements on graduation. So it is kind of an undercover operation from the point of view of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, because to recog-

nize it would mean to fund it. I am not being cynical. That would be a factor. There is not a lot of college-wide co-ordination on that. Each one does what it can.

Second, on the professional development question, I think we recognized some years ago that our future is in the development of our own staff. Not only must they be au courant with changing curricula and changing methodologies, but also we sell a lot of services to the private sector, training, etc. Why would anyone want our services if we did not demonstrate that we put our money where our mouths were by retraining and upgrading our own staff? So this varies from college to college.

This was certainly a major point that was brought out leading up to the strike of 1984, where the faculty of the province were essentially saying: "There just is not any professional development going on. Where is the leadership?" I think that has changed dramatically because of the initiatives.

Indeed, in this last year, the government itself has recognized the need for it and I think not only is going to provide funding but also has seconded one of my vice-presidents, Dr. Roy Giroux, who is not from l'Outaouais but from Windsor, to run a province-wide program, because he is a bit of an expert in this field, and I believe the government will come in with some help.

I think it is now seen as one of the top priorities, that we are not going to be successful unless we are actively involved in human resource development or professional development or whatever you wish to say. The Council of Regents is also terribly interested in this. So the level of intensity has really come up, and I think you will find there will be much more on that.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is very good news.

I have a couple of more specific questions. You said quite a bit about remediation, at least at your college, Humber. You suggested it is not good for students or it somehow handicaps them. I was not able to get the phraseology that you used. You also mentioned that a possible thrust we could take is to remediate between February and June. I am wondering who you would suggest be responsible for that particular time line, and then what you meant by the statement you made about the handicapping.

I presume—and I may be incorrect—that you do the remediation at a department level; you do not bring in your applied arts teachers to do it; or there might be combinations.

Dr. Gordon: Yes. The two points specifically are that if a student has graduated from high school, he is rather upset to be told the minute he starts college or university—and by the way, this is not a phenomenon unique to Ontario. Yale, among other places, offers remedial English, so it is a societal problem. Nevertheless, an individual is highly offended to be told, "You are not capable of proceeding with this program because your skills are weak." So we do the best we can to bring them up.

What we are seeing now with the semester situation is a period of time which I suggest could be more profitably used for that purpose and other purposes, because it is a dead time, unless the student is going to take a job or something, to wait for September.

Certainly, it is a very good time, because the reverse of the coin is not only that the student is offended, but also that it is ludicrous to suggest that a student who is weak in reading, math, writing, communicating, whatever, can suddenly launch into textbooks that he cannot read and simultaneously be doing the remediation.

Miami Dade College, where we happen to know some people, is considered the best college in the United States. We feel our colleges are very good, but they have one major advantage over us, because their success rates are higher and they trumpet this all over the US. In fact, it is simple. The Legislature down there has recognized that remediation is an issue and that self-paced instruction is the way to solve it. So they will fund a student who continues on a successful course even if it is for four years, which could include two years of remediation.

They are talking about an immigrant, unique population, but I do not think it is totally different from what we are dealing with, to be perfectly honest. But we refuse to recognize that, so we must do remediation at the same time as the students are in a sophisticated program, in two years or three years, and obviously we pay an academic or attainment price for that. I just think it is impossible. Every college is doing what it can and doing quite well.

Mrs. O'Neill: You have not yet identified who would be responsible for it.

Dr. Gordon: That is the third point you mentioned. Once they come to college, once they are admissible, which is the bulk of what we are talking about, the only window we are talking about is this group that is graduating in February. Obviously, as long as they are in the secondary school, it is their problem. As soon as they start

college, it is our problem. In between, I suspect a shared activity.

My personal view—and I do not want to pump for the colleges—is that when students get older, they start getting more sophisticated about other activities in life and high school becomes a bit of a bore, particularly when they look around and everyone is younger. My personal preference would be to say: "You are in college. Just do not tell everyone you are doing remediation, so to speak, because who cares? Say 'I am a college student,' as opposed to, 'I am going back to high school to complete things that I did not do very well.'"

I think it is a combination. We could work the school boards. There are a lot of possibilities. Cost is a big issue, and availability of teachers to do it. Nevertheless, I think we could work on it. I just signal it as a very real problem, but I think there is a window here to solve it.

I submit to the Legislature that it is penny wise and pound foolish, because if someone says the taxpayer is not prepared to fund remediation, I suggest to you that it is the taxpayer, as it always has been, who is prepared to fund unemployment, welfare and all kinds of social problems. It seems to me that if you teach people to fish, they feed themselves for the rest of their lives; if you give them a fish for a day, they eat for a day.

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Mrs. O'Neill: The other situation I wanted to ask you about was teacher exchange. I wondered if you had done any of that because there certainly are problems regarding federations and collective agreements. Have you been able to work through all of that?

Dr. Gordon: We do more professional development than we do exchanges. We are delighted with some of the results because not only are people learning and growing together, but they are building trust and they are seeing new ideas. We work mostly with the Etobicoke Board of Education, but if we do some good things with it, they are applicable to every school board, so that we can change curriculum and learn from things we have gained from them.

I am not terribly impressed with the fact that we cannot do anything because there is a collective agreement. We simply have to find ways around it. We are in a changing society. If we are going to be blocked from everything we do because of the inertia of our existing structures, we are in very big trouble. We just have to find creative—

Mrs. O'Neill: I am sure you are going to keep pushing on. My final question: Are most of the

colleges on a three-semester system; in other words, open 12 months of the year?

Dr. Gordon: They are open 12 months of the year I would say universally, but not necessarily with three semesters, because many of the federal programs and many of the provincial programs which are nonpost-secondary are indeed different combinations anyway.

So there is no question that they are open. Whether they are open three semesters for post-secondary varies from college to college, whether it is a co-op ingredient, for example, which would call for three semesters, or whether there is an entry from February to August to complete a semester to catch up with the ones that went from September to May; it varies.

There again, it goes from college to college, as long as we do not break the funding regulations and the academic credibility of each program. I think we have the autonomy to make our own decisions on that.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you for being so clear with your answers.

Mr. Jackson: I very much appreciate the depth of your presentation. You have stimulated a lot of areas. I have the problem Mr. Johnston had. I would like to get into a lot of examination of some of your statements. I am intrigued by your statement that there is a dropoff in technology course selection. That is an experience. I would like to know what, in your view, are the main factors for that.

Dr. Gordon: I think one of them is at the high school level. They cannot offer everything. Certainly, depending on the size of the school, they make some choices.

They are not particularly worried about feeding into the colleges. I do not see why they should be, as their primary goal, because they have to cover the broad spectrum. It just appears that way for some of the courses which we feel are mandatory for success and indeed for entry into some of the technologies. The technologies now are extremely sophisticated.

Mr. Jackson: To paraphrase you, this is a function of OSIS, whether it is student selection—

Dr. Gordon: I think it is more a function of choice of the school.

Mr. Jackson: Yes. I was going to get into the other side. There are some exciting things occurring in Sudbury with the school board and Cambrian College with respect to reshaping the model for technological trades to appeal to the students on the basis of the income that the new

technologists are earning and the fact that they are not all covered in grease. They wear white.

Dr. Gordon: I think that is an excellent point.

Mr. Jackson: Ernie Checkeris has introduced me to some phenomenal programming up there. That is your point, but that is something which is a commitment at the secondary level, carried over. Since we are assessing OSIS, I am trying to get a sense from you as to where you see it, if it is selection—

Dr. Gordon: I think there is also a time lag in understanding that the technology of today and the programs that the colleges offer are not trades of yesterday. Therefore, the academic attainment, it could be argued, is a significantly higher requirement than it would be to enter a bachelor of arts degree at a university.

It is going to take some liaison and communication with the school boards to understand that they have to beef up those things to allow their students to enter college programs of technology.

Mr. Jackson: I will stay on the subject because I know the other professor wants to get in, but is there also the problem that community colleges have been eliminating certain technology programs because they are your most expensive, by definition? There have been many that have been severed because you can sever one dental hygiene course for the cost of severing six English courses, quite literally. It is that expensive.

Dr. Gordon: That is an interesting observation.

Mr. Jackson: It has become self-fulfilling.

Dr. Gordon: It is true that each college, certainly in Metro, which I know the best, tends to specialize so that we do not fall all over each other with certain types of technology. Therefore, presumably students in this area at least, from Hamilton to Oshawa, have a choice of every possible technology offered. Obviously, it is more difficult, say, in Cambrian, Sudbury.

Mr. Jackson: I am not going to argue with you on that point, but for the dental hygiene one alone you have 2,000 applicants for 31 positions.

Dr. Gordon: Absolutely. There is no question that the costing is forcing certain colleges to close programs.

Mr. Jackson: Which they did down in the peninsula.

Dr. Gordon: Absolutely, and that is a very great problem because we still need dental hygienists. But our problem is to balance our budgets, because we cannot run deficits. How-

ever, there is another problem we feel exists in the technology and that is the public media, the sweeping statements that citizens react to, and that is, the bloom came off high technology; there were going to be only a few people, by definition, who could run these robots that will eliminate jobs. It is the same as nursing. It goes up and down like a roller-coaster as the word gets out that there are nurses required or there are not nurses required.

In high technology the word was passed, let's say, at the beginning of the 1980s when it was the wave of the future. People suddenly realized that there were going to be only a few people in that wave because the engineer would have his own computer and would not even need the technology, let alone the technologist required, and that most jobs would of course be in lower-level areas. So they began to find ways of avoiding technology to find areas where there would be jobs.

Do not forget, job placement is a major criterion in terms of coming to college. The promise, in effect, is that they will have a job on graduation, whereas the university is going to broadly educate and will not really have to concern itself with whether they get jobs.

Mr. Jackson: I know we have to watch the clock, but I would like to go back briefly to the issue already raised, which fascinated me, on the February to September period used for remediation. For four years we tried to suggest to the then Minister of Colleges and Universities, who also carried the Ministry of Skills Development—and as you know, literacy programs flitted among four ministries until they lighted upon the Ministry of Skills Development in the recent cabinet shuffle. This has been a matter of concern, and it strikes at the very points you have raised with respect to who pays for it, who denies responsibility for it and who will be accepted.

Until a government—not this government, any government—accepts that it has a problem in terms of the expertise and general level of accomplishment of its graduates, it cannot get rid of the problem. It is a basic Gestalt notion and without it we are doomed.

Tying that point in with linkages with colleges, I have long been an advocate of the notion that students do not like to return to a place where they have failed, which is another way of paraphrasing your point about the maturity factor, of their not wanting to go back to high school when they can go to community college. That is fine; that creates the environment, but I have a concern that community colleges, which

are proficient at developing instructors, develop somewhat different skills from those we require of our teachers whose job it is to teach, especially in remediating a student. Those are very important teaching skills.

I have long held that we should be linking our colleges with our high schools so that we can not give an upgrade or an equivalency of an upgrade, because I have seen the upgrading courses and personally I am not impressed with some of the equivalency upgrading I have seen going on. You have also alluded to the other point about it, which is: how can it be successful when it is going coterminously with a very challenging course where reading is a component?

Why are we not then, for example, saying that we should have our secondary school teachers seconded to the environment of a community college under the supervision of a principal, who by law is the only person who can grant a secondary school graduation diploma in this province? A community college cannot; it can deal only in terms of, "We believe it is an equivalency; therefore, you can proceed."

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I would like to hear from someone in your sector on that point, because there has been a tremendous reluctance on the part of the government to deal with it. I am not sure why. School boards are doing some very exciting things in terms of going into plants and working with remediation and upgrading in English skills, because they are shift workers and because they cannot get to a community college or a high school. There are some very exciting things there, and yet we seem to keep hitting a brick wall when we come to our community colleges. You have challenged us with two or three very exciting ideas, one of which I have been advocating for four years and I am getting nowhere.

Dr. Gordon: I think your question is extremely complex because, unfortunately, we are talking about different categories of students. There is a very great difference between the student who has already graduated from high school and someone who just arrived at Pearson International Airport without a word of English or French. We have many of both categories, both of whom cannot speak or write very well, at least in the languages of Canada, primarily English, although there is obviously a franco-phone sector.

On your point about the high school principal, I could not agree more, but the point is, what do you do with the ones who have already graduated

from high school? They have the diploma. That is where the government, if I may submit—and I have hammered this point before, so it certainly does not embarrass me—finds, for whatever reasons, and it may very well be simply money, a difficulty in acknowledging that problem.

You have to put it in categories. If they are not graduates of high school, I would be perfectly excited about working with the schools. They certainly have excellent teachers who deal on a more ongoing basis. However, the colleges also have significant numbers of staff who do nothing but this. They are professionals. English as a second language is a major part of every college's activity. They are specialists in that capacity, rather than in high technology, photography or whatever.

You have to put it in, just as the federal government and your provincial government tend to target groups—you know, natives, the handicapped; the list is endless. Unfortunately, the success rate of those who are in the upgrading categories is open to question, particularly in a high economy; will they just stay on the job until they get laid off and then they have perhaps missed an opportunity? The biggest category I was talking about were those, the bulk of our students who are already high school graduates. That group has never been acknowledged as having any problems. That is why each college deals with it as it can, so I think you have to put it into departments.

Therefore, what I was really talking about in the February to September thing, if we were to publicly acknowledge that this might be an issue—and without humiliating high school graduates or those who are almost graduates, and that is why I think the secondary schools could certainly do it—is that maybe, because of the point you made about the psychology of not going back, it could be a joint function, where we have this wonderful sort of enrichment program, which will allow you to be far more successful in college, which you are going to start in September. Bear in mind, some may have to work. That is another additional problem. There may have to be kind of a—

Mr. Jackson: They are eligible for student loans once they get into that sector.

Dr. Gordon: Exactly.

Mr. Jackson: If Madam Chairman will allow me one very brief question, and if you would give me a brief response, could you clarify—

Dr. Gordon: I could allow you the question. I cannot guarantee the other.

Mr. Jackson: Okay. I will be as focused as I can be.

You made reference to the linkage with staff and exchanges. I would like you to expand on that. Do you mean, for example, that you have a problem with remedial teaching, funding, staffing—you made some references to both—and high schools where, we have heard this week, we have a severe shortage of technical teachers, which we have at the community college level?

With enrolments dropping off, first at high school but now surfacing at the community colleges, are you talking about that kind of exchanging where you have a surplus of technology teachers, perhaps, or a half-time teaching component in a local high school and the remedial teacher in the high school could go? Could we be as bold as to look at something like that?

Dr. Gordon: No.

Mr. Jackson: That is too bad.

Dr. Gordon: No, it is not. You can be half bold because—

Mr. Jackson: As brass.

Dr. Gordon: —when you are talking about technology, the sophistication of the programs that we offer in robotics, CAD/CAM and instrumentation and numerical control, is such that it is highly unlikely that the average technical teacher from high school would be capable of delivering it, for the same reason that the average—

Mr. Jackson: I am sorry; reverse that. It is the community college dropping down to the high school to motivate and excite and help dynamic programming and get the teachers turned around in terms of promoting it. That is what I am saying.

Dr. Gordon: Yes, it is possible. I am not suggesting that we are able to do that or that we are more developed, etc., but certainly the reverse would be possible. I think it is excellent, particularly if someone were designated as kind of a master teacher and assigned to a school for a year or two. I think a lot of our people, quite frankly, would enjoy it, because it is a change. In particular, they do not have to pick up stakes; it would be in the local school board.

As far as the remediation side is concerned, I think there is tremendous potential. When I talk about exchanges, I talk primarily about those fields—the human studies, economics, history, geography—rather than specific programs, but every college offers a component of general education. I think there is tremendous possibility

for exchange, because the grade 13, grade 12 and grade 11 teachers know the content. I think there is the stimulation and the potential for changing because, given the fact that content is all the same, they are going to exchange methodologies and motivations, etc.

Mr. Jackson: You wanted to comment, Dr. Collins?

Dr. Collins: I have one 30-second comment. The volunteer model would be the model that best describes what happens now. I think the notion of a little bit of innovative seed or pilot support funding really could kick in a lot of these initiatives which are talked about. Specific colleges are sharing facilities with specific boards. As one example, Durham College of Applied Arts and Technology is doing exchanges and professional development interaction. But you run out of energy when the volunteer model is the prime basis on which it works.

Mr. Jackson: Yes.

Dr. Collins: All it needs is a little catalyst, and I think that would be the way to—

Mr. Jackson: Spelled c-a-s-h.

Dr. Gordon: But if it is a little c-a-s-h, with it is, like an honour to do it, then I think you have something.

Mr. Jackson: You also have access to identify those schools which are generating most of your students. You can compound the significance and the impact of motivating students to go from one to another. The idea of having an instructor in the high school setting and you then surface again a year later to meet with that same instructor is very exciting in terms of students' development and obviously has a basis in terms of some of our preliminary apprenticeship linkages. Why we are not moving full steam ahead in this area is beyond me. Thank you. I could go on for hours, but the chair would eventually cut me off.

Madam Chairman: Any second now, the chair was going to do precisely that, Mr. Jackson.

I would like to thank Dr. Gordon and Dr. Collins for coming before us today. As has been mentioned, I think by Mr. Johnston way back when, you may have posed more questions than you have provided answers. I think you have done a bit of both. You have certainly challenged us and we very much appreciate your contribution to our committee.

I would also like to thank the Citizens for Public Justice and the Wentworth County Board of Education for so patiently waiting for us. We

are running approximately 45 minutes behind, because we did have other business to conduct at the beginning. I would now call on the Citizens for Public Justice, if you would come forward.

After you are seated and have a chance to get your material out, could you introduce yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard? We have allocated a half-hour for your presentation. Due to the fact that we are running quite a bit behind, I will have to adhere to a fairly strict time line in that regard. I have noticed that your presentation is quite extensive, so if you could try to allow time at the end for members' questions, we would appreciate it. Please begin whenever you are ready.

Mr. Vandezande: Thank you. We did supply the clerk with 20 copies of an abbreviated opening statement.

Madam Chairman: Members, do you have that? Thank you.

CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE— ONTARIO

Mr. Vandezande: Thank you, first of all, for allowing us to appear before you. With me is Dr. Harry Fernhout, who is a senior member in philosophy of education with the Institute for Christian Studies here in Toronto, a government-recognized, post-graduate school specializing in the articulation of philosophy and curriculum development. Dr. Fernhout has also been actively involved in the development of curriculum materials that are being used by teachers in public, separate and independent schools throughout Canada, as well as in other parts of the world. He would be particularly qualified to deal with questions pertaining to government responsibility and philosophy of education.

In appendix A, attached to our brief, there is a description of Citizens for Public Justice and its Ontario division. We have appeared before a number of committees of the Legislature as well as before committees of the Legislature in Alberta and British Columbia with regard to educational issues.

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I turn now to our opening statement. CPJ urges the government to recognize in its education policy five major concerns:

First, the need for essential public justice conditions which would ensure legal equality of educational opportunity for all students and for all faith and value communities regardless of creed, ideology, philosophy or religion.

Second, the need for satisfactory instruction criteria which provide a fair standard for quality

education and allow for the effective implementation of a variety of educational philosophies. A draft statement of such satisfactory instruction criteria is attached as appendix B to our brief.

Third, the need for all school systems to develop their own philosophy of education within the framework of a common, mutually-agreed-upon statement of satisfactory instruction which is equally applicable to all schools.

Fourth, the need for nondiscriminatory recognition and equitable funding of all bona fide independent schools that meet fair, satisfactory instruction and accountability standards.

Finally, the need for careful consideration of the report of the commission on private schools in Ontario by Dr. Shapiro, with a view to using some of its recommendations as a possible basis for implementing fiscal fairness for alternative and independent schools.

As I mentioned, Dr. Fernhout is particularly qualified to answer any questions you may have regarding the relationship between the government's responsibility to administer public justice for all people and the various school communities' obligation to articulate and their right to implement their respective philosophies of education within the framework of a common, mutually-agreed-upon statement of satisfactory instruction.

In our view, the Ministry of Education and all schools in Ontario urgently need a fair standard for quality education. It is not now available. Therefore, CPJ recommends that the ministry formulate satisfactory instruction criteria and that those criteria be developed in co-operation with the various education communities now active in Ontario.

The second part of our brief states CPJ's rationale for the government's duty to establish and maintain equity in education in a democratic, pluralistic society such as ours. In this section, we summarize CPJ's views of pluralism, the government's role, religion, the family's role, and human rights.

We recommend that the government publicly recognize and equitably fund all bona fide alternative and independent schools in Ontario. It is becoming increasingly obvious to more and more people that the Liberal government must make some essential changes in its basic approach to education policy so that there will be public justice for all. The blatant discrimination against Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Montessori and Waldorf schools is inexcusable. The government's grievous failure to treat these and other bona fide educational communities fairly is a

flagrant violation of both the letter and the spirit of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

As a free nation, we cannot profess to encourage freedom of conscience and religion and freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, as we do in our charter, and not respect those who responsibly practise these very freedoms in education. As a democratic society, we cannot profess to protect every person's right to equal treatment without discrimination because of creed, as we do in the Ontario Human Rights Code, and at the same time discriminate financially against educational communities which democratically exercise their constitutional rights and freedoms through the establishment and operation of bona fide independent schools. Justice must be seen to be done also by the Ministry of Education.

We keep hearing via the media, especially from the Treasurer (Mr. R. F. Nixon), that the government cannot afford additional expenditures, not even now when the wealthiest province in Canada is experiencing one of the biggest booms in its history. We are willing to assume for a moment that this is true, because we are eager to facilitate a good discussion of the public justice principles which should shape the government's relationship to independent schools. Furthermore, we want to enable the government to make an in-principle decision which is rooted in public justice for all and begins to reflect Premier Peterson's "sincere hope to resolve this historic issue in a fair and positive way." The latest communication to that effect from the Premier, over his own signature, dated February 16, 1988, is attached to this opening statement.

In this particular historic context, CPJ-Ontario recommends that the Treasurer authorize the Ministry of Education to set aside in its budget \$1 per pupil per year for all students who attend independent schools and that this grant be paid to these schools during the 1988-89 school year.

This educational expenditure would involve only about \$60,000. This amounts to a mere six ten-thousandths of Ontario's education budget. It would be a public token of the government's stated appreciation for the substantial contribution made by independent schools. As well, it would be a political signal that the government takes seriously the province's legal obligation to end the intolerable discrimination against various faith and value communities which responsibly exercise their constitutional rights and which

daily sacrifice a big part of their hard-earned money, which is over and above the taxes they pay, for the sake of quality education for their own and their neighbours' children.

CPI-Ontario therefore urges you to endorse our recommendations in your report to the Legislature.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Vandezande. I notice that you certainly have allowed time for questions, and we appreciate that. Does your colleague have any comments before we go into the questions?

Mr. Fernhout: No, nothing in a preliminary way. We will just take the discussion as it comes.

Mr. Reyecraft: I am somewhat intrigued by your call for funding to the extent of \$1 per pupil per year. I recognize what you have requested and what you feel is appropriate in terms of providing public justice, but to what degree is what you want satisfied by such a token amount? Frankly, if I were in your position and that suggestion had come from the government, I would treat it as an insult.

Mr. Vandezande: We were serious with the \$1 per pupil per year for the reasons stated. Namely, we think it is important that the government face very honestly and very positively its obligation to do justice to all faith and value communities in Ontario which are active in education. To prevent a discussion emerging around "Can the government afford it?" we said, "Okay, give a dollar per year and let's deal with the basic principles that should shape the government's policy with respect to alternative independent schools," so that we do not get lost on side streets and dead-end alleys but deal with the issue head-on.

The correspondence we get and the private comments being made to us by government spokespersons repeatedly assert, "But we can't afford it now." Simply give us \$1 per year, then deal with the issue. Make clear the basic principles on the basis of which the government could make new policy and then be honest about where it stands.

There is the report from Dr. Shapiro of a number of years ago. He clearly put forth specific recommendations on the basis of which I think genuine negotiations could be conducted with alternative and independent schools interested in the kinds of arrangements he advocated, and then we could get on with the show.

Furthermore, there is the obligation, I think, particularly as you as a committee deal with the question of the philosophy of education, to recognize the distinct contributions which alter-

native and independent schools make with respect to development of various philosophies of education and the impact those philosophies have on curriculum development. Dr. Fernhout can say more about that, but I think it is time now for this government, particularly now that it is in a majority position and particularly now that we are financially well off, to do something and to do something positive, in keeping with the Premier's repeated promise that he would deal with this matter in a fair and positive way.

I would not consider it an insult. It would be a step on the road to justice.

Mr. Reyecraft: I think I understand now what you are asking for. That would then represent a statement by the government that it believes there should be some public funding of independent schools. The debate would then focus on how much.

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Mr. Vandezande: On the principle, yes. I think we should settle the principle of the thing, the same as we should settle the principle of which standards should be put in place that are equally applicable to and binding on all schools, public, separate and independent, so that all these schools can deliver the kind of quality education that the province is entitled to. Now, no such satisfactory instruction criteria are in place, and we think they ought to be. They also ought to be in place for independent schools.

Dr. Fernhout: May I jump in at this point? The brief that Citizens for Public Justice has submitted makes rather repeated use of the phrase "all bona fide schools," and I think the proposal that is being made here is a dimension of an attempt to communicate the fact that alternative and independent schools are legitimate players in the educational scene. The brief tries to signal that, in part, by not only stating a willingness to submit to criteria of satisfactory instruction but also actually proposing such criteria. I think the idea of \$1 a year would be another way of signalling that, in principle, alternative and independent schools are additional legitimate players on the educational scene.

Mr. Vandezande: You may have noticed that in appendix B there is a proposed statement of satisfactory instruction. It was developed by a special task force in which a number of people from across the educational scene in Ontario participated in an attempt to develop satisfactory instruction criteria that would be equally acceptable to all school communities. This was checked by people out of the ecumenical, interfaith

community—and that will be officially released later—all of whom recognized the validity of this kind of a framework. It is appendix B attached to the full brief.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you for your brief and your supplementary document. I understand what you are trying to do with the \$1 per student. It is in order to elicit a clear and concise statement of support for the students you are advocating for and the system of education which has been working in this province for quite a few years, quite frankly.

You indicated that conversations with the government have indicated that you have been led to believe that the problem may be only budgetary. Could you expand upon that?

Mr. Vandezande: Yes, I am prepared to do that. As you will note, the letter sent by the Premier (Mr. Peterson) to us in February 1988, as well as other letters sent to his constituents in London, never made reference to any problem that the Premier himself had, either with the proposals of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario or with proposals made by us and other groups in the province regarding schools. From time to time he has also acknowledged—and so have other members of the Liberal Party, as well as of your own party—the quality contribution that independent schools have made.

In some private discussions, the issue of money has come up. The argument has been made that until there is adequate funding in place for all the needs of the public system—that is, both the public and separate systems—there can be no consideration given to the needs of alternative and independent schools. We want to take that comment seriously.

Let it be clearly understood that we do not want any funding that comes to alternative and independent schools to be at the expense of the budgetary needs of public and separate schools. However, at the same time, it should be realized that the government, by not facing up to its legal and moral obligation to meet the needs of parents who sacrifice from their moneys to run these independent schools, cannot dodge its obligation: it must do something sooner or later. So we said: "Okay, if money stands in the way, make a token payment. Show your commitment to, and recognition of, independent schools and let's have a public statement to that effect. Then let's see whether, within the framework of the budget, eventually perhaps more moneys could be made available." I think there are ways and means of doing that.

Mr. Jackson: My second question, then, would have to do with separating the question of legitimacy with process, and that raises, of course, Deputy Minister of Education Shapiro, who is waiting—I guess he is in the position of sitting on his own report, which is an unusual phenomenon in this province, and then reporting as to when he will report on his own report. Have you gotten any indication in terms of the time lines: when we might hear something from the government, whether it has been deep-sixed or whether it is on for January? Do you have any idea at all where that is going? It strikes me that simply transferring \$1 per student is not as important, perhaps, as the substantive issues of autonomy, curriculum matters and others which Shapiro dealt with in great detail.

Mr. Vandezande: Two comments. With respect to Dr. Shapiro's present position as Deputy Minister of Education, he has, and I think rightly so, been very scrupulous in not using his present position to push, at least publicly with us, for a particular response to his report. We do not know what he is doing within the ministry; I would expect that he, from time to time, reminds the minister and other members of the cabinet that report is there. Others within the ministry have told us that the report is being given active consideration, that various proposals have been developed within the ministry. They have not given us a time line, but the question of how to structurally make the necessary arrangements so that there can be a proper relationship between the ministry and/or between publicly funded boards and independent schools is being given careful consideration.

On the question of satisfactory instruction, which in some ways is very important to us, because we think it is public justice criteria the government should develop for all schools, we understand that much thought is being given to that within the ministry and that it hopes to come up—but we do not know when—with a proposed statement. Our response to that has been that the ministry should not in isolation develop satisfactory instruction criteria, but that those standards should be developed in co-operation with the various schools which would be affected by those standards, and that from the outset, in a co-operative way, the ministry and the various school communities in Ontario should work together. The kind of criteria we are talking about, if they are going to be fairly applicable to each school community, must have that school community's input and consent. Otherwise, you get pronouncements from Mount Olympus

which are not going to be very helpful to the development of democratic participation in the educational process.

Furthermore, we do not think it is the task—Dr. Fernhout can say more about it—for the ministry to develop a philosophy of education. It should be the schools that do that themselves. Clearly, the ministry has a public justice interest in the kind of educational framework which ought to be articulated, but as to which values, perspective, pedagogy and philosophy of education should shape that, I think we need to hear from the various educational communities. It should not be a few bureaucrats who decide what should be the philosophy and goals of education, say, for the 1990s.

Mr. Jackson: I am glad you ended on that point, because as you are probably aware from reading Hansard, when we finished phase one of the committee's activities on the philosophy and goals, the whole dialogue was woefully deficient in terms of the ministry taking a position in that area. We tried very hard to get an understanding on the basic premise of whether the philosophy and goals should be developed within the various sectoral interests in education in this province—and they are very diverse—or whether that should be done from Mount Olympus, as you referred to. We did not get satisfaction as a select committee looking into the matter, so that remains left open. It will be our challenge how to deal with that when we write our report, which we hope to table in the Legislature before Christmas.

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There is another element that concerns me. I am hearing between the threads of your statements that you are getting some feedback from the ministry, the Premier and constituents of the Premier that everything from this report is being taken very seriously by the ministry and it is looking at implementing elements of it and analyzing it carefully, to the opposite, which is, "We cannot touch this with a 10-foot pole until we finalize some serious and outstanding matters with respect to the last major funding initiative of the Ontario government," which was Bill 30 and separate school funding.

Earlier, if you had been here when we convened at 10 o'clock, there was a problem that was raised as to the role of this committee by my colleague Richard Johnston, and I concur with him. It is quite possible for us to begin in, say, January or February, phase 3, which would be private school funding. Yet it is hard for us to make that decision if the ministry is planning to

do something in a very public way on its own. We have an equal problem in terms of getting an answer from the government on how best to order up our agenda. I can offer you no answers because we, too, are seeking answers to those very questions. We did not get them in phase 1 when we asked the minister directly, when he was before us the final day, and we will continue to ask him.

Mr. Vandezande: It would seem to me that this committee at least could pursue this option. You may have seen the recent report in the Toronto Star that a \$12-million package was put together that might be of assistance to independent schools and then was dropped. It would seem to me that the ministry owes it to this committee, given the broad terms of its mandate, that it should ask this committee to make recommendations to the ministry as to how you, as members of this committee, in the context of your task view the recommendations made by the Shapiro Commission on Private Schools in Ontario within the context of your overall mandate and how and in which way the ministry could take some steps to recognize the contribution independent schools are making.

I think the other recommendation that could be made by this committee is that the ministry make no moves with respect to either philosophy of education or standards for education without first hearing from this committee and without first consulting the various communities—schools boards, public, separate and independent schools—as to what they perceive to be the most appropriate fair standards, given the situation in which they find themselves now and given the challenges they must face in the future.

In the past, the Minister of Education has often bypassed the consultative process, and I think it has been to the detriment of education in this province. The result has been, in part, a proliferation of independent schools because people were not being consulted. If the government is seriously interested in establishing the public justice conditions that should obtain to make sure there is quality education for all without preventing anyone from applying his or her particular philosophy of education through the school of his or her choice, then those people need to be consulted. But you cannot suddenly bring down, say, a few months from now, a philosophy of education or a funding policy without the participation of members of the Legislature or the participation of the school communities affected by those funding proposals.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: I would just mention two brief points with reference to Mr. Jackson's comments. Originally, when we first started talking about the time frame for our report, we were hoping it might be ready to table with the Legislature in December. It now appears unlikely, in view of the fact that we may have to extend the time for hearings of the committee and, second, with the time for publication and translation, that we would have the report available for tabling in December. It is most likely, optimistically, probably late January, but probably more to the clerk's suggestion, it may even be in February. That was just one point I wanted to clarify so that people are not expecting a report too early, even though it may well be written prior to when the House rises in December.

The other point was with reference to our agenda. The committee has not yet decided, as Mr. Jackson alluded to, what our agenda will be for phase 3. In fact, we have to first ensure that the mandate of our committee will be extended past February 1989. Certainly, the topic you have raised is one that will be on the paper for consideration. We cannot give you any guarantees whatsoever at this stage; it will be up to the committee members what the topic will be, but we will assure you that it certainly will be one of the considerations.

Mr. Vandezande: Could I just make one footnote to that? Of course, while it is not explicitly mentioned in the mandate given to this committee, inherent in your responsibility to consider what the philosophy of education ought to be in this province, you need to deal with the reality that currently there are different philosophies of education. There is a Jewish philosophy, a Catholic philosophy, a Montessori philosophy. Those realities you need to examine and to ask yourself, are the ministry's guidelines currently fair to those different philosophies and are the structural relationships between the ministry and these different philosophical education communities of such a nature that they do justice to all?

While it is not immediately explicit on your agenda, it is there, nevertheless. To ignore what the separate school system is doing or the Jewish school system is doing with respect to their respective views of the philosophy of education is to ignore a large slice of Ontario and, consequently, you would not have a comprehensive report.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for your comments. As I say, we certainly will take them into consideration.

Mr. Vandezande: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Our next presentation will be by the Wentworth County Board of Education. Perhaps you could please come forward and take a seat.

Mr. Greenleaf: Thank you, Madam Chairman. My name is Allan Greenleaf, director of education—

Madam Chairman: I am sorry. Could you just take a seat. Before you introduce yourself, we have two problems. One is with electronic Hansard, which cannot pick you up until you are seated, and the second is that the television cameras are liable to be showing your tie talking if you are not in your seat.

Mr. Greenleaf: I was counting on Hansard not being able to pick it up, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Please proceed. We have allocated half an hour for your presentation, including questions and, as I mentioned, because we have started so late today, we will have to be fairly rigid about the time line. Please begin.

WENTWORTH COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Greenleaf: My name is Allan Greenleaf, director of education with the Wentworth County Board of Education. With me today is Rhea Springsted, who chairs the Wentworth County Board of Education. On reviewing how we were going to proceed, on the way over it was determined that I would make the presentation and Mrs. Springsted would kick me any time I said something I should not. I will proceed on that basis, if you do not mind.

First, I would like to point out that the introductory comments in the document that has been forwarded to you suggest that the material has been put together by a committee of teachers, administrators and staff members who have taken a look at the four topics that were specified for presentation today, namely, grade promotion, streaming, semestering and OSIS. We have confined our comments to the four topics in the belief that this was what we were supposed to do, and I think we will stick with that as the format.

I would also like to point out that, along with Mrs. Springsted today, three of the individuals who were involved in the discussions in late August are here today as well, not as part of the presentation team but simply as interested observers in the process that is being undertaken by the committee itself. Those three individuals are all elementary teachers: Wendy Matthews, Adrienne Fasullo and Lyle Bentham. I am delighted that they were able to come along

today. It was not ordered that they do so; it was simply made possible that they could.

I would point out as well that the report they have submitted has been reviewed by the board's senior administration and is presented as an appropriate philosophic position for each of the four topics identified by the select committee. Although not lengthy, the direction suggested and the comments included are commended to your consideration, but I do have to add a caveat at this point; that is, that the circumstances by way of time frame for board meetings and for committee meetings render it impossible for us to say that this represents the official position of the Wentworth County Board of Education.

As might be expected, the views included have provoked considerable discussion and are suggested for your consideration in view of the extreme pressures on education currently being generated through the political process. It may very well be that some of the recommendations will prove to be neither practical nor practicable, and you will not find anything I am saying in the document either. I think it is important just to note some of the introductory comments.

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The major difficulty for us, as pointed out, happened from the time lines imposed on would-be presenters. I do not dispute the time lines. It is simply a matter that I learned of the opportunity in July, made the call and was granted this date. It was indicated subsequently that the submission would have to be in the form of 25 copies by September 1. Through the graces of the clerk, I was granted an extended time frame to September 6 and the documents were presented on that basis. That permitted no changes in the document that would have allowed board committees or the board itself really to have a whack at it and say, "Here's what we want to see or don't want to see."

The validation processes that we normally follow were quite simply impossible, but the board itself would concur that the document represents a reasonable and supportable position for the administration to take in any submission that would come before the committee. There may be areas, however, that the board itself would wish to see changed for various reasons. I guess they relate not only to politics, but financing and educational desirability as well.

I am going to hit the second page because one thing that is not in your documents as originally submitted happens to be a cartoon. The clerk has the cartoon itself. It is a cartoon of a board of education with the chair of the board saying: "It is

unanimous then, we will return to the basics. Anybody remember what they are?" I think it is probably appropriate that we address that question in the context of the committee because it is the very sort of thing that you have been wrestling with during the summer and will continue to wrestle with.

I had the opportunity to attend the presentation made by the minister and the deputy minister earlier in the summer and I am fascinated by the comments I just heard Mr. Jackson make with respect to still having to reach for what the philosophic base for public education in this province will be. I can assure you that as a public educator I sometimes feel exactly that frustration.

While we applaud the Radwanski report, in particular with respect to grade promotion—you will find this on page 3—and the recommendation that clear promotion criteria be established, we do believe that promotion from grade to grade may be too limiting, given the fact that certain students require longer time frames in which to develop the competencies expected. It is as simple as boy-girl differences, to tell you the truth.

We also feel that the value of simply retaining less accomplished students in a grade has not been adequately proven as a defensible educational practice. It is a convenient administrative practice, but not necessarily a supportable educational practice. We have made three recommendations with respect to grade promotion.

First, and I guess this counters some of the comments heard earlier today, that the Ministry of Education establish criteria for student outcomes at the end of each division. It is appropriate, in our view, for the Ministry of Education to indicate what is appropriate for students to accomplish or to know or to be able to do by the end of the division. The notation, in particular, makes reference to K to 3 as primary, 4 to 6 as junior, 7 to 10 as intermediate and 11 to OAC in the documents you have, but I suggest to you as well that consideration may have to be given to the senior division being defined as 11 and 12 only with OAC being separated for purposes of clear identification.

We are also indicating to you that we do not believe there should be any arbitrarily imposed time limit regarding the completion of the K to OAC process or any part thereof. It is essentially skills and competencies that you should be looking for in the mandate with respect to grade promotion. For some it will take longer than

others. I think to view it in any other context makes success in the school setting very difficult for many children.

We made some comments as well. I will not dwell on those at any particular length, but I think it is appropriate again to point out, probably the third bullet down, that the development of provincial criteria should not necessarily entail standardized testing. There have been a lot of comments about standardized testing being imposed externally in the province if certain aspects of the present practices are proven not to be successful or proven not to be supportable for whatever reason.

But I would have to tell you that the Wentworth County Board of Education has welcomed with great pleasure the government initiatives with respect to provincial and board reviews of grade 6 mathematics and reading. The minister was so informed by letter almost immediately. This board has opted in for the full package at cost, as you are aware, of \$200 per school for the involvement of the individual schools.

We are also looking at the bottom bullet on that particular page and suggesting to you that province-wide performance criteria should not be too narrowly interpreted only in terms of program content. We are looking at skills and attitudes as well. I think it is appropriate that that be understood. There is a tendency, I suspect, to look for the measurable because it is simple to classify and simple to define. If that is where we stop, then we will have done a disservice to some of our students as well.

Under streaming—you will find that on page 4—there is reference to some recognition of the truth in the research reports that formal streaming perpetuates the effects of socioeconomic disadvantage for some students. I have no quarrel and I think our administrative group and our staff group have no quarrel with the comments in either the Radwanski report or the King studies that preceded those with respect to that as a particular issue.

We recognize that the progress of higher-achieving students is not hindered by heterogeneous grouping. However, it is certainly possible for the performance of lower-achieving students to be improved by heterogeneous grouping because of the role models that are there for students in that particular group, if the groups happen to be mixed.

We are recommending under that particular area that students from kindergarten to grade 10 be grouped heterogeneously in a home-room

class setting, that streaming should occur in grades 11 through OAC, instruction in course subjects be given in a home-room context from kindergarten to grade 10 and that the program in the intermediate division consist of core and electives.

We have made reference in the comments to the usefulness of examinations, as I am sure you are currently doing, in the Japanese and British systems with respect to models for unstreamed or nonstreamed education. One thing you do not have in your report is a further comment, however, and again something of a caveat, that media reports about the high suicide rate of school children in Japan and concerns in Britain about recent education reforms, including the abolition of academic tenure and the mandatory testing of school children, suggest the need for caution over any uncritical acceptance of external models.

I recognize some of the attractiveness of the systems that exist in those two nations but I think it is appropriate for us to remember that we do not live in those nations. We live in this nation. We have certain value structures ourselves.

I will not dwell, I do not think, on much more on that page, except perhaps the last bullet. Heterogeneous classes require a student-centred approach to instruction where teachers focus on empowering students by preparing them to assume increasing amounts of responsibility for their own learning. I suggest to you that that is something of a cumulative exercise.

The youngster does not necessarily come to school entering kindergarten with scissors in hand fully in the knowledge of how to cut. It is amazing what gets cut until somebody has taught what is appropriate for cutting and what is not appropriate for cutting. I think we have to remember that it is a cumulative approach, where gradually the responsibility of the teacher is to render himself or herself unnecessary.

1230

With respect to semestering, we have considerable interest in that topic, because it raged as an item of debate at some length within the small committee preparing this submission. The problems that come out by way of skill-based sequential subjects and semestering are ones that have been discussed in this province for many years. The appropriateness of time frame, however, is one that is probably only recently emerging, through the work on effective schools. If time on task is a critical variable to mastery, and there is every bit of evidence that it is critical, then the potential for decrease in the instructional

time available through semestering is cause for concern.

When schools were organized on 40-minute periods, as opposed to 76-minute periods and the reduction in the same, I think it is appropriate for us to wonder what has happened to the instructional time available. I grant you that is a school board choice and a school choice, but I think the practice has to be examined in that capacity. We are recommending that core subjects be nonsemestered in grades 9 and 10; that electives, where appropriate, be semestered; and that a review of the recommended number of hours of instruction for credit purposes be undertaken.

There is a reference in the comment part, "Greater flexibility with regard to timetabling may be required on the part of school administrators." That is not a comment critical of school administrators. It is simply saying that if you are looking at a blend of semestered, nonsemestered and variable-length periods, it is going to require a significant amount of initiative to timetable a school in that way.

Something that does not appear in your brief is a comment that relates specifically to Wentworth county in this instance, that we do have some experience in mixing nonsemestered timetabling for intermediate division secondary students with semestering for senior division students in the same school. We had it in one school, and while the concept appears to be educationally supportable, contractual requirements can make the scheduling process very awkward indeed. If you have different kinds of organization within the school, you have to attend to all the intricacies of collective agreement in order to ensure that there is no breach of the collective agreement.

Variable-length periods may complicate the concept beyond the realm of reasonable possibility, and that we grant, but I suggest that a review or the study of the possibilities that exist under that suggestion needs to be undertaken, or at least recommended, by this committee.

The last area, with respect to the amount of time, is important as well. It is a recognized fact that Japanese and German students spend more time in the classroom annually than is the case in Ontario. If that has any relationship to mastery of basic skills and the subsequent competitiveness in the international marketplace, it is something I suggest this committee needs to look at very seriously. Some changes in the structure of the school year and/or the schoolday may be required as a result.

I know what we are playing with when I say that, because the structure of the school year in

Ontario has almost the quality of holiness about it. We have not been particularly innovative with respect to using our schools across summer periods; nor in fact, by virtue of regulation, is there much inclination to go drastically beyond the five-hour minimum period of instruction in the course of the schoolday. That is something I suggest does need to be reviewed, not to the detriment of what we do well in the schools, but simply to say can we improve to maintain the competitiveness of the country in which we live and indeed the province in which we live.

Under OSIS, probably the most significant comment we can make is that it appears that if promotion by division is adapted, then the diploma looks like a two-piece document. It is one where we are dealing with the successful completion of the intermediate division plus a specified number of senior division credits for basic graduation diploma requirements. There is nothing particularly innovative in that comment; it simply seems to make sense to us.

The one thing we would like to stress is that OSIS itself cannot be viewed as a failure, because students who are currently involved with OSIS have not graduated in sufficient numbers under its requirements to have taken their places in the work world or post-secondary institutions. I think that has to be looked at in some way before we classify OSIS as a failed approach. It is not a failed approach; it is simply an approach different from the one that existed previously, and the longitudinal data are not available as yet.

Finally, and in conclusion, we are mindful in our submission of the recommendations that George Radwanski provided in the Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts. Of particular interest to us will be the linkage that emerges between the social or educational issues identified in the Radwanski report and the solutions that ultimately will be proposed in the select committee's report to the Legislature.

For us, the essential thrust to be sustained is to be found in the first and third recommendations of the Radwanski document:

"1. That the emphasis of education philosophy in Ontario be shifted from process to outcomes, and that the objectives of education be defined in terms of the acquisition of specified, demonstrable knowledge and skills by all children through the application of pedagogical techniques appropriate to each child's needs;" and

"3. That the Ministry of Education specifically prescribe program content and the necessary knowledge/skills outcomes on a province-wide

basis, while delegating to local authorities the selection of pedagogical techniques for teaching that content and bringing about the prescribed outcomes for all students."

If you, as a committee, are successful in moving these two recommendations closer to fruition, you will have helped to ensure that the expectations delineated for public education will be reduced to more achievable proportions. A clear definition of expectations is critical to any attempts to meet them, and the credibility of public education is inextricably connected to our ability to achieve what we say we are trying to do.

As members of the select committee on education, you have the chance to clear up the ambiguity which periodically confounds much of our effort at the local level, and we wish you well in that endeavour. Thank you for the opportunity of appearing before you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. I must say, personally, I found it to be an excellent presentation. I appreciate very much the fact that you did restrict yourself to the four topics that the committee is studying right now. I found that you focused very well on those. In fact, a number of the comments you made, to me, appeared quite similar to those the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario made. I felt you made very strong arguments.

Just one other brief comment: I found your cartoon about the back to basics quite humorous. You might also be interested in hearing a quotation from one of our presenters yesterday. I think it was Robert Brown. He was quoting from another source and he said: "Instead of going back to basics, why don't we start moving forward to fundamentals? You can't go back." At least personally, I found it to be a very accurate quotation and I think it fits in with some of the thrust of what you were saying.

With no further ado, we will go to questions from members. I have Mr. Mahoney and Mr. Reyecraft.

Mr. Mahoney: In your setup of the divisions, I am just curious, are you advocating the senior public type of school structure, grades 7 to 10 as opposed to K to 8?

Mr. Greenleaf: We have had a great deal of discussion about that concept in our own school system lately because we have looked at the possibility of reasserting the primacy of the K-to-8 structure, which does not ring true with some of the comments here if you are looking at the school structure as being directly related to the division itself.

What we have found is that because of our geographic shape, we have to cut what we do according to what is possible within the framework of the county. Let me back up just a minute. Wentworth county surrounds the city of Hamilton like a giant flattened horseshoe. We stretch all the way around the outside. We bus daily over 10,000 of the 16,000 students in attendance in our schools. The ways in which we organize our schools probably have been predominantly governed by ease of access rather than by the delivery of program. We have everything operating, from K-to-3 schools right through K to 8. We have a couple of senior public, and I suspect it is going to continue in that way.

Our neighbours within the city of Hamilton have moved into the realm of middle schools, and they have defined those as being grades 6 to 8. The difficulty, I think, which has traditionally been experienced in the senior school or junior high is the cross-panel designation which has predominantly meant interfederation difficulties. It can work, but it has to work with goodwill. We are not advocating that necessarily; we are looking at that as a program structure.

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Mr. Mahoney: Just very briefly, I am curious. In sort of reading between the lines, I see a strong support for the Japanese, British and German systems. I have had fairly substantial exposure to the Japanese system; in fact, I was there this summer and spent some time with a Japanese family in one of the homes on a Sunday afternoon while some of the folks were sitting around watching baseball, which is the pastime in Japan. The 13-year-old daughter of the family showed up with her English homework and I helped her. She is probably totally destroyed at this point in her English.

However, I was amazed. In the middle of her summer holidays, you should have seen the homework she had. Our kids would go crazy. I suggest to you that Japanese children are actually streamed more stringently than ours. In fact, many of them are streamed before they are born. It is laid out exactly where they are going. It is true. It relates very much to the family and it is very rigid. You can respect and admire them for their rigidity.

I read an article—I am sorry to go on, but this was an interesting comment—about a survey done in the western world, and it was amazing the number of people who did not realize that Japan is a democracy. They thought there was some kind of totalitarian state in effect in Japan, simply because of the customs, traditions and strictness

adhered to within the family structure. I just do not see that as being a plausible alternative for the great white north.

Mr. Greenleaf: It might be in the south, however.

In response to your question and comment, I do not think we are suggesting to you that we adopt the Japanese system in its entirety. One of the differences, perhaps, is exactly as you have described: the strength of the family unit. I am not certain we have that same strength in present North American society. We have it in segments, but I do not think it would be consistently found across either this province or North America in general, particularly with the divorce rates being what they happen to be and the number of times some children find themselves in single-family circumstances.

I am not about to suggest that the school system can cure that or should be the agency of curing that, if curing it is what we are setting out to do to begin with. I will tell you, however, that the streaming which goes back to family probably goes beyond that, because the family and the streaming which occurs for the family also relates to what company the individual works for. That is a family tradition of sorts itself, and I am aware of that. What we are simply saying is that if we are to have our students, province and country remain internationally competitive, I suggest we have some need to look at some of the accomplishments that emanate from those systems; that is all.

Mr. Mahoney: Mr. Jackson has asked me to define "great white north." I would just point out that that is the colloquial term for the amount of snow we get in Canada.

Madam Chairman: Would you like to define "snow"?

Mr. Mahoney: I would like to avoid it as much as possible, actually.

Madam Chairman: You mean the cold, wet stuff.

Mr. Reycraft: I cannot help but react to my colleague's comments about the Japanese system. He said that homework in the summertime would drive his kids crazy. I must advise on that. In Japan it does even worse than that. They have the highest suicide rate among adolescents of any country in the world.

I am interested, Mr. Greenleaf, in your proposal about promotion by division. First, it sounds just a bit like a system I recall from a number of years ago called a unit system, which was introduced in the primary division, where

each grade was divided into three units and students progressed from unit to unit, usually completing three per year but sometimes only able to do two; in other cases, they were able to do four in a year.

Within a division, would there not have to be some division so that there could be an assessment at various stages of a student's progress and achievement through the division?

Mr. Greenleaf: I think it depends on what you are intending to assess. If you are going to cut it in the way in which you have described, and I do not think we were necessarily promoting a unit system, because that in itself is a fairly rigid structure internally, then indeed you are going to have to assess at various points of the units. That, I think, would be a given under what you have described.

If, instead, you are looking at skill accomplishment as being something of a continuum within a division, it seems to me you can measure what happens by way of that student's mastery of skill as opposed to worrying what unit it fits into, particularly if you have not organized it that way, if indeed you are organizing the program in the primary division as a package as opposed to a package with many parts in it. It is going to require teachers to be tremendously observant, have excellent planning skills and presentation skills geared to working with students as individuals. That is what we say we are doing now.

Mr. Reycraft: The unit system was a structured system, but it provided more flexibility than the grade promotion system does. As I recall, one of the big difficulties with the unit system was that parents found it very difficult to accept. They did not want to know that their child was in unit 8 or unit 5; they wanted to know what grade he or she was in. Just knowing the unit was not good enough.

If parents refuse to accept that degree of flexibility in the system, is there any reason to believe they would accept an even more flexible system such as you are proposing?

Mr. Greenleaf: I think that is why we are suggesting that it be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to establish the criteria as opposed to individual school boards. I suspect where much of the difficulty occurred was because of the variance among schools, within the same school board frequently. School A may have been on a unit system and school B down the road was not and was in a very traditional format; the obvious and odious questions of comparison emerge, which almost drive you

back into a graded structure politically. I do not have the answer to much of how you would structure it. I just invite you to do it.

Mr. Reycraft: I also want to ask about your proposal to eliminate streaming from grades 9 and 10. You would agree, I am sure, that academic standards in advanced-level courses tend generally to be higher than those standards in general-level and certainly basic-level courses, would you not?

Mr. Greenleaf: I would say more demanding. "Higher" is a comparative term, I guess, that a student who cannot do something finds the next thing he or she is able to do "higher" than the last one.

Mr. Reycraft: Let me be more succinct. Advanced courses are harder than general-level courses.

Mr. Greenleaf: They are more complex, yes; maybe not harder for the individual student. That is the point I am making.

Mr. Reycraft: If we do not stream and instead use heterogeneous groupings in grades 9 and 10, is there not going to be a lowering of the standard for those students who are now in advanced-level courses and also concurrently an increasing of the standards that will be expected of students now in basic-level courses?

Mr. Greenleaf: That is entirely possible. I think that part of what you are looking at is the middle level in particular, since the students involved in general-level programs have frequently been the forgotten group. They can do some of but not all of, and it relates to both ends of the spectrum. Students who are involved in general-level programs frequently should have some of the courses, I would think, at the basic level but should be able to reach forward for some of the other areas. That is because that is how we define the stuff. We say that is basic level, that is general and that is advanced.

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We had experience in earlier years in at least a couple of our secondary schools of taking all of the grade 8s into a common group for at least the first half of the year and then sorting out where they could go beyond that first half year based on the kinds of skills, attitudes and concept mastery they were able to demonstrate at that time.

The problem in identifying as early as we identify is that if there are different maturational rates for individual students, then you doom to remain in a particular level almost from that point forward a lot of students who may not have

matured to the point of being able to understand, and I do not think that is fair.

Mr. Reycraft: I tend to agree that students who start out in basic-level courses find it very difficult to move into general- and advanced-level courses, even more with the latter. The same is true about students in general-level courses in grades 9 and 10. They find it very difficult to move into advanced-level courses in the senior grades. It is not difficult for students to move in the other direction.

Mr. Greenleaf: Which suggests then that all our students should go into advanced-level courses and then filter down. Is that what is coming from there?

Mr. Reycraft: Certainly, in talking to parents over many years, I think that most of them want their students to choose advanced-level courses unless they believe they will not be able to successfully deal with those courses. Parents want their students to choose general-level courses only when they believe they cannot pass the advanced-level credits.

Mr. Greenleaf: That may be part of the difficulty with the dropoff in the interest in technological studies in this province.

Mr. Reycraft: Oh, I believe it is. I agree that it is.

Mr. Greenleaf: You are looking at a director of education whose son is involved in technological studies and will leave grade 12 this year to attend a community college. He has some advanced level studies. He does not have all. Many of his courses have been at the general level and have been eminently practical because of the nature of choice. I am delighted he is doing that. I have a daughter, who will be most embarrassed if she ever reads Hansard, I am sure, who is in attendance at university entering third year.

Both of those individuals were able to make use of the skills and aptitudes they have, and I suggest I do not want either one of them ever emerging from being raised in a family thinking that because he or she did not become involved in advanced-level courses and had to settle for general or basic that he or she is a less worthy citizen of this province or this country. That is where the problem with streaming comes from.

Mr. Reycraft: I wish that every student in this province had parents who were as knowledgeable about the educational system, both secondary and post-secondary, as your children do. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

Mr. Greenleaf: I understand that, and you would have to check with my children to see whether they think that.

Mr. Reycraft: They may not yet, but at some point in time, I am sure they will accept that. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank both of you for coming before us today. I watched very carefully and I do not think I saw Mrs. Springsted kick you once, so she must have agreed with every single thing you said.

Mr. Greenleaf: You should have watched the elbows, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: I was noticing that board between you. That may have discouraged it. Thank you again.

The select committee on education shall stand adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The committee recessed at 12:55 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:05 p.m. in room 151.

Madam Chairman: Welcome to this afternoon's session of the select committee on education. I think we will begin now, since I see a quorum. I would like to welcome our first presenter, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. They made a presentation to our committee before in the first phase, so we are looking forward to hearing what they have to say right now.

We have allocated one hour for your time and we are hoping, in addition to your oral presentation, that you will leave us a lot of time for questions. Begin whenever you are ready, and please start by identifying yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO ENGLISH CATHOLIC
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Ms. Lennon: My name is Eileen Lennon and I am the president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. To my right is Douglas Knott, who is our deputy general secretary. On my immediate left is Dr. Robert Dixon, who is our researcher and a teacher at Msgr. Percy Johnson school here in Metro. To his left is Michael Cote, our first vice-president.

It certainly is a pleasure to be here again today and to present this brief on behalf of OECTA. The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association represents some 27,000 men and women teaching from junior kindergarten to grade 12 of the Ontario academic course in the separate schools of Ontario. OECTA is also an affiliate of the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

We welcome your invitation to comment on four topics in Ontario education: streaming, promotion policies, semestering and OSIS. This is an initial paper resulting from some study and committee meetings over the summer. After our presentation today, we may wish to enlarge upon our remarks or to discuss other topics important for Ontario education. I do not intend to read the entire brief, but I will highlight certain parts.

The first topic that we wish to deal with is streaming. Streaming is the classification of pupils for the purpose of forming instructional groups, ostensibly with a higher degree of similarity in regard to certain factors that affect learning. Other terms synonymous with streaming are homogeneous grouping, ability grouping, tracking and levelling. The opposing school

organization is heterogeneous, random or mixed-ability grouping. The history of streaming begins in St. Louis, Missouri in 1867, with bright pupils, and with less able students in Britain in 1897.

Streaming became more popular and widespread in the 1920s and 1930s. By the 1950s and 1960s, it was very popular in the schools in Ontario. The 1970s saw an upsurge of the philosophy espoused by the Hall-Dennis report of 1968; that is, the attempt to meet the needs of the individual student. Homogeneous grouping in elementary schools became a rarity. Today, the situation in Ontario is, for the most part, as follows.

Elementary classes are grouped by age homogeneously and by ability heterogeneously. Within the classes many teachers have a high, average and low group in math and language arts. In some schools gifted, talented and remedial pupils are withdrawn for part of the day or week for special teaching. Total segregation of these pupils is not in accordance with current ministry policy resting on both social and cognitive aims.

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At the secondary branch of education, although the classes are more flexible than under the Robarts plan, and therefore most students are, for much of their school day, in credits offered at the same level—basic, general or advanced. OSIS calls for modification of these three levels of courses for students with significant exceptionalities. Again, withdrawal is used.

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association reviewed the literature on streaming in Canada, the United States and Great Britain. We found that there were 28 researchers who had arguments in favour of streaming. Some of these were that teachers and administrators find streaming less complicated, in streamed classes there is higher motivation, slower students in streamed classes performed better and had a higher self-concept, above-average students in streamed classes reached higher attainments and students in ability-grouped classes made gains in elementary language arts and mathematics and secondary algebra, history and science.

But we discovered 67 researchers with arguments against streaming, and I will highlight only a few. Ability grouping proved detrimental for all groups, slower students did better in mixed classes, ability grouping is futile unless method-

ology and curriculum are differentiated and students stayed in their ability groups and there was inflexibility in programming. Streaming was destructive to self-concept; bright pupils became arrogant and slow pupils insecure and defeated.

Ability grouping favoured the higher socioeconomic child. In lower streams there was less class participation, more student failures and exaggerated artificial stereotypes. Streaming led to a preponderance of boys, minorities and the less-advantaged pupils in the bottom ability group. In the less-able stream, students expended less effort on learning, out of fear of sanction or rejection.

Homogeneous grouping constrained peer social choices and offered less exposure to ethnic and cultural differences; heterogeneous grouping in high schools resulted in fewer dropouts, less absenteeism, superior behaviours, higher staff and student morale, a better attitude to the school and a higher participation in extracurricular activities.

A review of the literature on the general level in Ontario's secondary schools shows that there is considerable diversity in what is being taught in the general-level courses. A significant percentage of students in the general course do not appear to have learned very much and are greatly dissatisfied with their schooling, according to King's study of 1976. There is little fit between the content of general-level courses and job requirements for both graduates and dropouts. Graduates have only a slight advantage in terms of the skill level and wages in the jobs they received on their exit from school. Both dropouts and graduates entered jobs with little career opportunity, according to King's *School To Work*, 1979.

In Peel, failure rates are higher in general-level courses; a student in general-level courses is four times more likely to drop out before obtaining a secondary school graduation diploma than a student in an advanced-level course. The student in the general-level courses does not have a post-secondary educational future, nor is he or she especially prepared for the world of work, according to Fraser. Students in the general-level courses are not well prepared for the colleges of applied arts and technology or for employment, says King in *Holding Power*, 1980.

The majority of the dropouts from secondary schools are students taking mainly general-level courses, according to the ministry's own secondary education review project of 1982. Little energy has been directed to the general-level program since OSIS. Most implementation

efforts emphasize changes in advanced-level courses. An increased dropout rate among non-university-bound students is projected. Some consequences of OSIS in relation to the needs of non-university-bound students may add to problems that they were supposed to solve. Policy developers are either ignoring or are unaware of the research favouring heterogeneous over homogeneous grouping, said Leithwood in 1987.

While general-level courses do relieve pressure on the student to compete academically with a more difficult curriculum, they also can contribute to lower self-esteem, a major factor in the dropout situation, says Karp in his 1988 study.

As well, there are many teacher arguments for mixed-ability grouping. A report out of England in 1978 showed staffs advancing the following points in favour of nonstreaming. Heterogeneous grouping prevents classification and the rejection of the less able. It avoids a hierarchy of groups and demonstrates the equal value of all individuals.

Nonstreaming produces social integration instead of élitism, the less-able students in mixed grouping have improved attitudes and motivation, co-operative learning is encouraged and opportunities remain open longer. Mixed grouping reinforces social integration, social cohesion, community, mutual understanding, mutual respect, mutual support, tolerance, co-operation and equality; it negates segregation, separatism, social divisiveness, intolerance, overcompetitiveness, disrespect and inequality.

Thus, you can see that the arguments against streaming considerably outweigh those in favour. The practice of levelling in Ontario's high schools seems to contradict the ministry's aims to educate the whole child—intellectually, socially, physically, spiritually and emotionally—to meet the needs of the individual and to provide equality of educational opportunity. There also seems to be a contradiction between streaming and the separate school's goal of fostering community.

As far as OECTA knows, since the appearance of High School 1 and OSIS there has not been one research study or major report that favours secondary-school levelling in Ontario. None of this is to suggest that all types of classroom grouping should be eliminated. Students should continue to be withdrawn for group remedial and gifted programs. Courses will be offered which appeal to interest groups, such as physical education, music, technical courses, drama, etc.

Courses may be given in senior divisions which are closely linked to a specific job.

How do we go about implementing heterogeneous grouping? The Ministry of Education must provide appropriate pre- and post-certificate teacher development programs, so that teachers without experience with heterogeneous classes will be able to acquire the skills necessary to expand their teaching repertoire to meet the individual needs of the students in their classes who are operating at various levels of ability.

There must be a much lower pupil-teacher ratio, which will facilitate a move from large-group to individualized and flexible small-group teaching. There must be teacher time for student conferences, mentoring and preparation of individualized curriculum materials to replace resources often aimed at the so-called average student. This is what we feel is the key to destreaming working properly.

The ministry should offer leadership development courses specifically dealing with the implementation of heterogeneously grouped classes. Decisions must be made about the balance of student time between group and individual learning. School boards will have to direct school budgets towards the acquisition of aides, secretaries and curriculum materials for all types of students.

The 110-hour credit straitjacket should be removed to provide a flexible timetable to allow for individualized and small-group pacing. In fact, OSIS already recognizes that the 110 hours may not always be the appropriate time for some courses. In section 4.5, entitled "Modules," it talks about courses being based on 30-hour modules.

Thus OECTA makes the following recommendations on page 20:

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1. That the pupil-teacher ratio in all divisions be sufficiently lowered to permit the replacement of full-time homogeneous ability grouping with individualization, mentoring and flexible small group instruction and to assign time for teacher-student conferences in preparation of individualized curriculum materials. Destreaming will work only if this occurs and only if it is implemented gradually over time with proper teacher retraining;

2. That the compulsory 110-hour credit be replaced by the teacher's judgement on the time required for each student's achievement;

3. That the ministry, faculties of education, school boards and federations provide education for the student teachers, teachers, administrators

and parents on the reorganized schools and programs;

4. That this reorganization be regarded only as one method of attacking the dropout problem.

In the next section we would like to address some remarks towards promotional policies and practices. We understand the select committee's concern about promotion policies and practices, especially in the light of the recent calls for a better system of accountability. The Ontario Ministry of Education's position on promotion is quite clear, as can be seen in the following excerpts from *The Formative Years* and *OSIS*:

"Individual teachers have the responsibility of selecting strategies, resources and activities appropriate to the needs of individual children," according to P1J1.

OSIS, grades 7 and 8, says, "It is a basic policy in the curriculum for Ontario that individual differences are to be accommodated to the greatest extent possible."

OSIS, grade 10 to Ontario academic courses, says, "The information derived from assessment should be formative in its purpose...."

On the matter of promotion policies and practices, practice does not always match the goals expressed in P1J1 and OSIS, partially because of teacher training and in-service, partially because of the levelling organization in high school and, most important, because of pupil-teacher ratio necessitating group instruction. Some teachers stress group rather than individual methodology and use summation rather than formative evaluation or an organized unit of study around general group-oriented objectives.

Thus we are presented with a number of dilemmas circling around the fact that past practice before continuous progress and HS1 contained the waste and repetition of pupils repeating a year's work in all subjects while present practice, in the minds of some critics, results in continuous promotion and teaching to the average majority rather than in continuous progress and individualization.

"Nonpromotion often depends on factors over which the student has little or no control," Goodlad and Anderson found in their research in 1987. Much of the research between 1911 and 1941 points out that children do not learn more by repeating a grade. Nonpromotion often results in emotional depression and discouragement, distrust in his or her own ability, expectation of further failure, aggressive, attention-getting behaviour, an intention to quit school, lack of

peer approval and acceptance, and feelings of inadequacy.

The second obstacle to adopting the previous system of pass-fail of a year's work with a group is the tremendous body of knowledge of the 20th century which points to individualized pacing. Several researchers have done work on the various stages of development of children. The first one I am going to talk about is Piaget and his cognitive development approach to human development.

According to Piaget, the mind seeks from the environment relevant information to construct a sensible system of order. These methods of organizing information fall into four sequential major stages of child development. The ages differ among individual children, but the sequence of the stages does not change. Intellectual growth contains its own rhythm. Premature teaching may be worse than useless, resulting in verbalization and masked incomprehension.

Kohlberg saw a parallel in the development of moral judgement and of cognition. He described the former in six stages, which I will not read for you but, once again, there is a predetermined sequence. One progresses through the stages in order.

Erikson sees the human being's psychosocial life as having eight stages. Once again, I will not read them all. They are there for your information. The important fact is that no stage is ever fully resolved. Growth is a struggle that ends only when life ends, and each stage is built upon the one that precedes it.

Bloom claims, in his theories of automaticity in mastery learning, that if the knowledge, skill and attitude objectives complement the child's level, then mastery learning becomes possible for all but a few individuals. It is a matter of providing enough time for learning to enable the child to move on to the next set of objectives with confidence.

The research of Goodlad and Anderson reveals that children entering school at age five differ in mental age among themselves by about four full years; that their achievement range approximates this range in intellectual readiness soon after entry into school; that the individual's achievement differs markedly from subject to subject, and that the initial achievement and mental range in the classroom grows with time.

All of these eminent educational thinkers and practitioners, Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, Bloom, Goodlad and Anderson, as well as recent research on the brain, provide an incontrovertible

support for the ministry's philosophy of continuous promotion and individualization.

Obviously, OECTA agrees with this philosophy. We suggest the following courses of action to improve promotion policies and practices: move from ability grouping to individualization in the secondary schools; encourage the use of objective-based teaching consistent with the ministry's guidelines and the regulations on pupil record keeping and special education. Such an approach will facilitate decision-making about student activities and resources, remediation, enrichment, evaluation and reporting to parents.

Pratt writes that an objective-based curriculum results in appropriate learning experiences, improved evaluation and better reporting. However, Humphreys, in his most recent study on pupil record keeping, flatly states that many teachers do not have teaching by objectives as part of their repertoire. Professional development should address this problem.

Thus, OECTA would make the following recommendations:

For each ministry guideline, determine a list of imperative core objectives, which, it is hoped, would be just a fraction of the total number of objectives. This would be helpful for the slower students and their parents.

Incorporate essential core objectives into a general studies program running throughout the intermediate division. This would enable more time on task and application of certain skill objectives to various disciplines.

Design sample report card forms which use the objectives format.

Offer workshops on teaching by objectives.

Our next topic, on page 33, is semestering. In semestered schools, each course lasts for half a school year and has a value of one credit.

In 1971, as a result of the Hall-Dennis report and HS1, there were 24 semestered schools in Ontario. By 1981, one third of the 596 secondary schools were semestered, and now, in 1988, the majority of the Roman Catholic and public high schools are on the semester system, although enough are on the traditional timetable to permit a comparison study.

I am jumping over to page 35. Some OECTA members express the opinion that some subjects, like English and history, lend themselves to semestering better than others, like mathematics and French. The former invite in-depth, variegated activities, while the latter suggest regular skill practice. There is little research, however, to substantiate either view. The secondary education review project cautioned that the length of

the period should vary with the nature of the course.

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In any case, it is time to get more information on this topic. Thus, our recommendation on semestering is that student achievement, attitudes and retention rates be researched in semestered and traditional schools and that this should be done soon or there will not be any traditional schools left.

The last item that we would like to comment on is OSIS. The reorganized program is starting its fifth year this fall. The Ontario Ministry of Education has a policy, practice and procedure to review aspects of the school system approximately every five years. A review should be conducted in 1989, with follow-up courses of action beginning in 1990. We would like to suggest the following questions for a ministry review of OSIS.

A more uniform program in grades 9 and 10 was to reduce student alienation to provide positive peer pressure with maintenance of the group and to integrate the learning experience. Has it?

The increase in the number of credits and of compulsory credits and the implementation of prerequisites addressed the issue of standards and student achievement. Has there been a measurable improvement since HS1? What effect has there been in selection of options?

The school was to move closer to the business and industrial community with programs in co-operative education, linkage, work experience, etc. How effective are these programs? Have they increased or decreased since HS1?

OSIS added two new aims to the secondary school: nurturing the adolescent and preparing him or her for the world of work. What progress and methods are in evidence?

The public wanted greater consistency across the provinces in courses. Is enough of this reflected in the courses of study, evaluation and reporting to parents? Are parents and students receiving clear, good information about the objectives of the courses of study?

Is fast-tracking occurring to a significant degree? What effect has it had on the student's overall program?

As a result of OSIS, all the ministry guidelines at the intermediate and senior levels had to be redone. What does an evaluation of them reveal regarding consistency, identification of core curriculum, and their usefulness to the teacher in designing specific knowledge, skill and attitude objectives?

Courses of study in most cases were to incorporate education in values, life skills, the arts, computers and technology, guidance, sex equity and multiculturalism. Has this happened? Is it feasible? Has teacher development taken place?

Has the dropout rate increased or lessened since OSIS?

A number of reports state that there is a poor fit between the general level courses and the preparation for the world of work or post-secondary education. Does the review bear this out?

Special education was to operate under a philosophy of mainstreaming as much as possible and with modified courses of study. What is the degree of successful implementation?

Caution was expressed about organizing all subjects into 80-minute periods in a school. What is the practice and result of student timetabling?

A certificate of education is granted to a student with 14 credits upon request. What are the statistics? Is this a desirable practice?

A number of students study credits through summer and night school and independent and private study. What is the quality of these courses?

The school was to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate drop-backs. What methods have been developed?

Have some schools achieved notable success regarding codes of behaviour, vandalism, absenteeism, drug abuse and alcoholism? How is the rate dropping or rising?

Formative evaluation was to be as important as summative evaluation. It should be; is it?

Mixed schools were reported as a failure. Are they being replaced by French-language schools?

Many of OSIS's thrusts required staff development. Have the school boards provided this?

There has been a low proportion of females in administration and in the teaching of certain courses. What progress has been made here?

Guidance was to be delivered by the entire staff. How and to what extent and how successfully is this being done?

A shortage of secondary school teachers has been projected. Has this begun in certain subjects?

Library resource centres were to supply the school with 10 to 20 books per student, according to Canadian Library Association standards. Resources were to include materials to support students at all levels of reading. What are the statistics here?

A considerable body of knowledge in the United States has reported on the topic of effective secondary schools. The following characteristics are common to such schools, according to the literature:

Effective schools have a clearly defined curriculum with prioritized, sequenced objectives and matching resource materials and evaluation practices.

Effective schools have an efficient, strong, clear principal with vision, not someone who is unduly restricted by board policies.

Effective schools have focused classroom instruction and management. There is regular, frequent, close monitoring of student performance.

Effective schools have clear expectations and consistency, clear and stable policies. They have high expectations for student improvement. There is consistent communication among staff, students and parents and there is a concentration on academic learning time.

Effective schools have a positive school climate. There is effort and time given by the staff to advising, tutoring, supporting and providing extracurricular activities.

Effective schools have order and discipline with clear guidelines for student behaviour, and the students are held responsible for personal behaviour and for school duties. Teachers are modelling desired work norms.

Effective schools have teachers with considerable autonomy, who are included in the decision-making process and who are respected as professionals.

Effective schools have community support and involvement. There are rewards and incentives for students. There are opportunities for meaningful student responsibility and participation, and there is the presence of a nucleus of able students to set the pace and tone.

Thus, our recommendation on OSIS is that the Ontario Ministry of Education should conduct a review of OSIS in 1989 and have follow-up action in 1990.

In conclusion, a recurring theme in educational research and literature is that it is the teacher, not the organizational plan or the methodology, making the crucial difference between high or mediocre student progress. Whatever changes are contemplated for Ontario's secondary schools, teacher involvement and development will be the key to teacher ownership and consequently, successful implementation. OECA, with its 27,000 teachers in the Roman Catholic schools, stands ready to

participate with the government, school boards and parents in educating today's young people.

Thank you very much. I will be happy to entertain questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Lennon. First, I must congratulate OECA on its brief. It is certainly one of the most comprehensive we have had and has a tremendous amount of research. In fact, I suspect that after Mr. Johnston saw that five-page list of questions the ministry should be looking at when it reviews OSIS, he is probably about ready to ask for an interim report by the ministry during the life of our second phase as a committee. Have I pre-empted you there?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Not quite. I was just going to say that ministry personnel could take them as read. If they could have them next week, that would be great.

Madam Chairman: I do not think we could find a more comprehensive list.

Ms. Lennon: We like to be helpful.

Madam Chairman: You certainly have been. Mind you, with this plethora of information you may have posed more questions than solutions, but it is certainly along the right road.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would like to reiterate what Madam Chairman said and basically add that the way OECA put down what was in the body of the report and also in its summary of the research that has been done on streaming is very helpful just for our own education, in terms of knowing what studies there are and what the basic thrust of them were. I think that is very helpful.

It is also quite interesting to look at the dates on a lot of those studies; some of them are quite old and a few of more recent vintage. I was a little concerned as a politician looking at Erikson's psychosocial life cycle on page 28, where it says old age is integrity versus despair. That is the story of my political career.

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Mr. Jackson: That is when you are in caucus.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is another matter altogether, which we should not get into, of course. Mr. Cooke and I were sharing our remembrances of these theories and wondering if we had made it to stage two.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I was not wondering at all. How about you?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have two questions which come out of the notions of destreaming and promotion that you talk about. It seems to me

that an extension of the concept of getting into more heterogeneous kinds of groupings and classes and not using retention or holding back a student as a useful educative tool raises the question about whether or not we need grades per se and whether grades in fact get in the way of getting rid of notions of promotion, which can be quite negative, or in fact play a real role in terms of the destreaming. Once you start talking more and more specifically about these kinds of age groupings, you end up with problems.

We have had a couple of groups that have come before us and said that grades 1, 2 and 3 might be lumped into one group at this point and that you do not really need to have the distinction in grades of that level. I wonder if OECTA has done much thinking about that extended question which comes out of destreaming and being much more progressive on promotional notions. What about the use of grades at the various levels within both the elementary and secondary panels?

Ms. Lennon: We did not really delve into that specifically. I suppose it could be seen that eventually in a totally destreamed system, if all the proper resources were there, the classes were small enough and enough retraining had been done, that is a possible outcome, but we have not taken a position as such at this time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One of the arguments at the junior level was that in fact the differences in kids' learning abilities were accentuated by the school entry dates for some of them and maturation dates, girls versus boys, that sort of thing in those first few years, which made arbitrary retention or promotion policies actually dangerous to the education of the kids.

Ms. Lennon: As someone who was in a classroom two years ago and who has a background in primary education and taught junior kindergarten, there is a big difference, particularly at the junior and senior kindergarten levels. When you have a girl with a January birthday and a boy with a December birthday, you probably do not have to look at the chart to know which one is older and to see that there is a big difference just in their behaviour. The level of maturation is incredibly obvious.

I think boys in grade 1 are often disadvantaged if they are late babies. The message is that if you are having babies, have them in January, February and March, particularly if they are going to be boys.

Mr. Jackson: I have two done that way.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am sort of hit and miss myself.

Mr. Jackson: Planned parenthood.

Mr. Reycraft: Careful now.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Be careful of the subjects you want to get into here.

The other area that we have had some discussions from some groups about in streaming is people taking sort of a halfway position between total destreaming and the structure that we have, especially in the public system versus the Catholic separate system. That is, a number of people say that grade 9 should be operated like public school classes and have a much more heterogeneous kind of organization, and then you move into streaming. Others say grades 9 and 10 should be that way and then grades 11 and 12 can be more streamed and that sort of thing. What is your reaction to those kinds of suggestions which have been brought to us?

Ms. Lennon: Our suggestion is that you would start with the grade 9s and 10s. That is part of what we are saying about it, that it has to be gradual. I know in England the research shows that when they brought in destreaming in schools there were certain elements that made destreaming work and there were other elements that caused it to be a bigger nightmare than when they were streaming. For destreaming to work, there must be smaller class sizes, so that individualized programs can occur. There has to be teacher retraining and there have to be appropriate materials, because most of the book publishers aim towards an average child. Special education teachers will tell you their biggest problem is finding materials that they can gear to each of the children they are serving.

When they destreamed in England, in schools where they did those things, where they provided the materials, where they had lowered the class size and where they had retrained the teachers, destreaming worked. In schools where they did not do that, it did not work, it was a disaster and there were all kinds of problems, almost more so than before. Perhaps Dr. Dixon would like to comment a little bit on the aspect of what the literature would show, because he did more of the specific research.

Dr. Dixon: As I am sure you are aware, Mr. Johnston, the ministry has regarded the intermediate division as being grades 7, 8, 9, and 10. It seems to be a convenient—pardon the word—lumping of the young adolescents. Speaking personally, because we have not discussed this at the federation, I would say that we are asking students to make some pretty hard, tough choices at younger and younger ages, when you go back over the last 30 years. If we are not going to

destream the entire high school, I personally would urge that we save the credits, as we now know them, for the senior division.

Ms. Lennon: I think it is very difficult to ask a 13- or 14-year-old, who is often at a very mixed-up and difficult time in his life, to make choices that are going to affect him for the rest of his life perhaps. I think that is one of the strongest arguments in favour of destreaming.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am going to ask you one last question, which comes to one of the major differences that seem to be coming forward from the Catholic presentations; that is, some of the attitudes towards destreaming that are coming from your system come partially from not having many basic level students in the past in comparison with the public system. You do not have a history of having structures for it, but it also seems to be coming from a philosophical approach to how you dealt with special ed.

We have had people here from the Waterloo Catholic board, and I have talked in the past to a lot of the people from Wellington about the way they have tried to do things around integration. When we had the Waterloo board here the other day, I basically said I would love to hear OECTA's response, from a teacher's perspective in the classroom, to this very glowing report on how things were going in Waterloo. Were those teachers, at this stage, finding they were getting the proper resources from their central resource group or were they finding that they were not getting the kinds of support you were saying that study in England said they really needed to be able to do things, even for the special ed kids they have been trying to maintain in the class?

I was wondering if you could maybe comment on what your experience has been, from the teachers' union's perspective, on how that kind of integrated, destreaming philosophical approach on disability has been working within your system in terms of the resources available?

Ms. Lennon: What we have found is that in situations where class sizes have been lowered and where there is a lower pupil to teacher ratio, mainstreaming is working. Where, with certain sorts of disabilities, the individual child is provided with an aide, that does work. The crucial factor is that the PTR must be lowered. Someone gave me a wonderful example the other day.

Pretend that you suddenly find out you are having 32 people for dinner and they have 32 different kinds of food allergies and you have to cater to each one individually. I think we all know how we would react. If somebody gave us

10 or 15, we might be able to handle it. That is a little like what a teacher is presented with if he or she has 35 students, four or five with exceptionalities which are identified and all kinds of others who have just arrived in Canada and have English as a second language or have family problems and so on. You can see how the numbers affect what you can do.

1450

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Johnston. His timing is always impeccable. He knows right when I am about to cut him off.

Mr. Mahoney: He knows when we are getting fed up.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Are you still upset because you have agreed with me twice in the last few days?

Mr. Mahoney: It is not bothering me.

Madam Chairman: I think we better proceed before it gets worse. We will hear from Mrs. O'Neill, followed by Mr. Jackson.

Mrs. O'Neill: You asked the question about guidance being delivered by the entire staff as having been one of the goals of the OSIS document and whether that has happened. I do not know the answer to that question. I am extremely interested in what is going on in guidance at the secondary school level, certainly in the intermediate side of the secondary school, as well as in the senior. I wonder if you can answer your question for me, at least from your own experience, and tell us what you feel about the guidance programs as you see them. Are the resources there? Do you get the supports from the other institutions you have to deal with in that area, that kind of thing?

Ms. Lennon: I am going to ask Dr. Dixon to respond on some of this. In the elementary schools where there are grades 7 and 8 in a great many places, I know it is the classroom teacher who is doing the guidance. For more of the detail you would like to have, I am going to ask Dr. Dixon to respond.

Dr. Dixon: I will speak to this from two perspectives. When I was with Cam Jackson in Halton, the guidance curriculum had just come out and I was in charge of implementing it. Now, as somebody teaching university and high school, I am in charge of actually doing it.

The guidance curriculum came out roughly at about the same time as OSIS and, subsequent to that, the studies. The new thrust was that guidance staff are the specialists and are there to

take care of the overall organization of the school and also—how shall I put this?—the emergency cases, the people who really need some expert attention. The routine guidance—what subjects are you choosing? how are your study habits? how much time are you allocating to homework?—is supposed to be taken care of by the regular classroom teacher with a spin for whatever subject he is teaching, such as, what are the careers in history? This is in theory and this is the ministry guideline.

My personal experience is that the in-service has not happened to make that very large attitudinal change in the classroom teacher's mind. It is a different role for the home-room teacher. It is also a different role for the guidance specialist. That is just my perspective, though. That is why we put it down as one of the questions we feel should be asked in the ministry review.

Mrs. O'Neill: Do you have nothing else you can tell me about it? I find what you have said is helpful. I would have liked a little more of: Are the supports there from the other institutions? Do you get good communication, good literature, good direction from the community as a whole?

Dr. Dixon: I would have to throw that back at the present, because the perspective I have given you is from inside the classroom, and the attitude there seems to be, "I have a lot to teach already without getting into this."

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. We will leave that then.

Ms. Lennon: We have some of the same questions as you. That is why we put it there. It would appear that it is not as good as it should be, and we certainly think it should be looked at.

Madam Chairman: We have Mr. Jackson, Mr. Keyes, and Mr. Reycraft on the list. I am not sure if we will get through that, but we will start with Mr. Jackson.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Drop Reycraft.

Mr. Jackson: Yes, drop Reycraft. I will be brief. I have two questions.

Mr. Mahoney: I agree with you, again.

Mr. Reycraft: When do I get my turn in the chair?

Mr. Jackson: Your turn in the bucket.

I am delighted to see Dr. Bob again. It is now official. Every day we have had somebody from Halton at one point before the committee. —

Dr. Dixon: You are suffering from déjà vu.

Mr. Jackson: And the president is also a resident of Halton. We are delighted to have you here.

Ms. Lennon: No, no, a resident of Peel.

Mr. Jackson: You have moved.

Ms. Lennon: No.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There has been some upgrading.

Mr. Jackson: Some upgrading. Clearly, you have moved to a more crowded situation.

My first question has to do with your comment around semestering, which was an afterthought—it was not in your text—where you said your recommendation is that the student achievement, attitudes and retention rates be researched in semestered and traditional schools. You went on to say that this should be done soon or only semestered schools would be left.

Do you recommend that we perhaps have a short moratorium while we study it? To study it is one thing, but you are almost implying that there be a moratorium on changing to semestered schools until such time as we have analysed it.

Ms. Lennon: No, I did not mean to make that implication. That is a decision best left to the local school boards and, in many cases, to the local school community. However, I think the trends will show that more and more schools are becoming semestered. I do not have statistics on that, but I think it is fair statement.

Mr. Jackson: Fiona Nelson usually explains that a phenomenon occurs in education and then afterwards we find a way to justify why it was good that it happened, and I get the nagging feeling that is what has happened in semestering. You enunciate some positives, but you also draw our attention to sufficient evidence from other testing that has gone on which we should examine more objectively.

My second question has to do with recommendation 2.9.2, "that the compulsory 110-hour credit be replaced by the teacher's judgement on the time required for each student's achievement." We have heard how children learn at differing rates. I understand the pedagogical reasons we would instruct a student at the rate at which he is able to learn and progress, but we are really looking at how we structure schools; so I am trying to put that recommendation in the context of how we would administer that.

To complicate my question, I also add that I have had some parents call me who have indicated that when they do all the adding up of all the time frames their child will be taking a given subject for the 110 hours, they are coming woefully short of the 110 hours.

It is unfair for me to ask you that question because it really should have been to the

ministry. I guess I am asking two things. If we are going to allow flexibility, that is one thing, but I am also getting a sense that we are not monitoring and warranting that we are giving 110 hours right now, that there may be cases where we are doing only 80 or 85 hours. Is there an inherent risk in developing structurally a flexible system when we are not even warranting the one that has so much structure?

How can a parent be assured, and a student for that matter, that the time frame a teacher suggests is all that is required and that he has achieved all of what has been required of him? Do you understand where I am coming from with the question?

Ms. Lennon: Yes.

Mr. Jackson: I am not asking you to defend the recommendation. We have heard from many people who agree with you. I am now trying to put into it how we would structure our schools and how we would have the checks and balances which are essential. No one denies that they are important.

Ms. Lennon: I am going to ask Dr. Dixon to respond to that.

Dr. Dixon: Radwanski suggests mastery learning. I am going to seize on your word "flexibility." Actually, I would see it as being less flexible. What we are saying here is there are going to be competencies and he is going to be tested on the competencies. If he does not do well on the test of the competencies, you make one of three decisions: (1) he needs more time, so he is going to go through it again; (2) he is a special case, so he needs remediation and special help but can carry on; or (3) for this kid we forget about it; he has cerebral palsy, so we are not going to expect the competency of the 100-yard dash.

I see it as less flexible in that I want more testing towards the objectives which have been laid on right at the beginning of the course.

1500

As for the mechanics of the thing, just to throw out, because we have not thought of the mechanics, we could say we are going to test—pick a number—every four weeks, every eight weeks, quarterly or every 30 hours. Then he is going to take those 30 hours again, in a different way perhaps, a different methodology, but he will take them again. He will not repeat the entire 110 hours. It is too long to wait before deciding, "Well son, or daughter, you did not do too well here."

Mr. Jackson: One quick question then. Implicit in this recommendation is that if the student can do it in 65 hours, he should be able to get out of that class and get on with some independent learning because he has achieved that level. It may be a personal contract between the student and the teacher that he may wish to do additional work at a higher level or a higher challenge.

That is what I was reading into that. It was not just for those who are lagging that 110 is not enough. It is also the opportunity that it can be done. That is why I threw in that question. I think in some schools kids are not getting their 110 hours. They are getting 80, and we are saying that is sufficient. That is why I gave you the example, to show you that some kids, bright kids, fast learners, can get through the work and get out of the class earlier.

Ms. Lennon: I do not think we disagree that it is a possibility that could happen. Where we started out on this was saying that the kid does not get the credit. He has 110 hours of class, he does not get the credit, so he has to repeat the whole 110 hours. Maybe 130 hours would have done it for him. It tends to be a real straitjacket.

In the statistics on general level kids, in King's studies about how many of them are behind in credits, you put them into a real failure kind of situation. On the mechanics of how you would work that out, we do not have all the answers right here. We are saying to look at the 110 hours. What is magic about 110 hours? Maybe there are other ways to design the courses that would offer greater flexibility for kids, both the kids who can learn faster and the kids who need a bit more time.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for those five brief questions. We are almost out of time. We do have two speakers. If they would commit to keeping the preambles very short and the question quite short, we might be able to get both Mr. Keyes and Mr. Reycraft in.

Mr. Keyes: It follows on what you were just saying to Mr. Jackson. Surely it is not a case of time frame that is essential, but it is the objectives for the course. Therefore, much more emphasis must be placed on the objectives to be learned within that course, whether it is done in 120 hours or 50. That is certainly the thing. It does create lots of problems for the administration to try to organize that and it does tend to contact learning with the student and teacher.

I just want to clarify to make sure, because my own contention has been that we make the selection process way too early at the moment. In

getting rid of streaming, you have perhaps indicated that since it might not go all the way, at least we would keep the intermediate level to the end of grade 10, keeping the same general course which can, for other purposes, be called a core curriculum for everyone's high school education.

Have you ever thought perhaps that instead of three streams, we might take the last two years as two streams and continue one as the general course, which would then take a majority of your students in a continuation from where they were, but in those last two years have the advanced level as the other one for those who are by that time deciding that they are going on to an institution of higher level at the college level? That would, to me, be a more practical way. It does provide that opportunity for more challenging work at the advanced level for those students who have by then chosen their route. You seemed to lean a bit towards that, but I have reduced it to two levels.

Ms. Lennon: We did not deal specifically with the two levels, but I think Dr. Dixon can speak to that and what he has found out in the research he did for us.

Dr. Dixon: I think the label "general level," after 20 years, is quite a pejorative term now. The students are aware of it, and I would like to see us get rid of it. At the senior division level, I think you are right that students are now making decisions, but I would not set up the courses on the basis of general level and senior level or even on the basis of university preparation, community college preparation or work preparation. I would set up the credits to give them certain aims.

You have a course in 19th-century English literature; you take that because you are interested in the topic or because you are going to take it in university. You have a course called Journalism and Report-Writing; you are taking that because that is the kind of work you are going to go into, you are going to go into community college or you are university-bound, but here is a course in journalism and report-writing that looks interesting.

The only reason we are talking about credits in the senior division—I think they are old enough and we should be offering credits to cater to different interests and strengths, but not think in terms of general and advanced; just think in terms of these different courses to lead to different competencies.

Mr. Reyecraft: You said that in England, where they have destreamed and have reduced

class sizes, it has worked. Have we learned anything from that example about how small the classes have to be?

Ms. Lennon: I think the research statistics would show that classes should be somewhere around 20 and less. You seem to get significantly different outcomes when you get to that number.

Mr. Reyecraft: Is there any evidence to indicate that where a class size has not been reduced and destreaming has been attempted it has not worked?

Ms. Lennon: Yes, there is. I want to emphasize again that to make class sizes smaller is important, but you have to have the other two elements as well. One is teacher retraining and training to learn how to deal with this new kind of structure; and then there is the learning material. I think we would be very concerned if the ministry decided to go into destreaming and did not put all those three things into place. I know I said that several times, but I really want that message to be left. Otherwise, it will not work.

Mr. Reyecraft: Do we have any idea what percentage of our secondary classes are under 20 in number?

Ms. Lennon: No.

Mr. Reyecraft: It is not a majority, though, is it?

Mr. Knott: The figures are there, but we do not have them with us.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The figures can be got. I am sure that is possible.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Reyecraft, would you like to request that of the ministry?

Mr. Reyecraft: No. The point I am trying to make is that there is a significant cost factor involved in destreaming. Do you have any idea what that might be?

Ms. Lennon: No, we do not.

Mr. Reyecraft: I am sure that is available, too, Mr. Johnston.

Madam Chairman: I think Mr. Johnston has just made a quiet request of the ministry that he would like that information. Am I interpreting correctly?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Very well done again, Madam Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Reyecraft. I will never again suggest you do not get a question.

Mr. Reyecraft: You are most welcome.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You were not nearly that helpful this morning.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank both members for keeping their questions quite brief. I would like to thank OECTA for its contribution to our committee today.

Ms. Lennon: Thank you very much for having us. It has been a pleasure.

Madam Chairman: Our next presenters are from the Simcoe County Elementary Principals' Association. Please be seated. We have allocated a half hour for your presentation and questions. If you would like to start off by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard and begin whenever you like, we would hope you would leave plenty of time at the end for questions. We recommend perhaps half for the oral presentation and half for questions.

1510

SIMCOE COUNTY ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION

Mr. Buckley: We represent the Simcoe County Elementary Principals' Association and, as a result of that, are here on behalf of some 80 elementary schools and perhaps as many as 20,000 elementary students.

On my extreme left is Terry Geddes; next to me on my left is Edna Parker; on my right is Mary Mangoff. My name is Bob Buckley. I am the chairman of the association and the presenter for this afternoon. All four of us are elementary principals in the county.

I guess our presence here essentially grew out of the beginnings of a report we were asked to prepare for our own board in response to the Radwanski report. With typical lack of modesty, we felt we did it so well that we decided we would send our response to the ministry. Following that, we felt we had a good deal more to say on a number of important points for which we felt we needed a wider forum. With your patience, we will go through a few of those. I will not read the submission, because I am sure you have done that already. We will spend a few minutes summarizing our main points and then perhaps, as the chairperson suggested, we can spend the majority of time with interaction.

We want to make basically two points. First of all, because of the fact that we come from an elementary perspective, and that does not mean simple in this case, words like "process," "skill," "individual" and "developmental" are very important to us. In fact, we consider that they are the essence of the education process.

From that base, our second point is that some of the recent happenings have raised some concerns for us, mainly about influences, from

both internal and external sources, that seem to be driving our education system towards products and measurable growth. We read this in the media constantly, we hear from employer groups, we hear from our own higher educational institutions, we see things like the Ontario assessment instrument pool and, of course, the Radwanski report. We sense that many elements in our society in fact are oriented towards products and measurable growth.

We have a sense also that as our students become older, there is a great emphasis placed within our own system on product rather than process, on decisions made on the basis of pass-fail, on performing to sets of external standards. This presents us with a dilemma of some kind. It raises the question: Who are we really serving; the children in our schools or, for want of a better phrase, those who would control the system from outside?

As elementary educators, we see a need to carry out our particular style, approaches and philosophies right through the system, even through to the university level. Mentioning the university level presents an interesting case as well. If we follow the philosophies of our kindergarten-to-grade-6 documents, all of those are based on active learning and processes and so on. I have been involved at the university level. Many of their programs are based on what is called the adult learning model, which, again, is self-motivated learners with small-group and active kinds of things. We seem to have a space in the middle where we drive our students through exams, marks, pass-and-fail, repeat and all those other things.

We have a sense that we are always preparing students for the next level. It seems that the highest level in our system is the one that sets the parameters and everybody else is expected to prepare with those parameters in mind. Our feeling is that we must reverse the parameters, we must reverse the level at which the parameters are set, that the needs of our children are the place where our system should form its demands and that institutions through the system should then set their programs according to the products of the earlier stages.

It is our responsibility to give our young people a positive view of themselves and their contribution to our society and it is our task to ensure that our schools maintain a warm, caring environment for students of all ages as they reach towards the challenges of modern society.

If I can address the four topic areas that are listed, we have some difficulty with streaming,

especially at the level at which it seems to occur. In this sense, streaming is defined as the separating into three levels in high school, in grade 9. We feel that it throws our students into a world of competition and comparison at an age where, first of all, we feel they are not ready. They have to make decisions in that world before they even understand how the environment works. In fact, some of the major decisions are made before they ever enter the environment, while they are still in grade 8. At that particular time in their lives, the human instinct to group together socially for mutual support while their personal confidence grows is much stronger than the desire for academic achievement, I suggest.

In the business of grade promotion, I was interested in one of the questions from this side of the table. Before you can have grade promotion, you have to accept the stance that grades need to exist. If you accept the stance, however, that learning is a continuous, sequential process, there is an argument that can be placed that we do not need to chunk things by grade levels, and certainly we do not need to call them grades. But that is an idealist's kind of situation. If we must have grades, then our sense is that promotion or retention should be based on achievement and developmental levels and keeping peer groups together, with a notion of modifying our programs for those who are in difficulty or those who have exceptional abilities.

On semestering, we have come to the conclusion that semestering is one of those split-decision topics. It has its good points and it has its bad points. Probably, as with all 50-50 splits, the ideal is somewhere in the middle. I see no reason we cannot have some creative combination of semestering and nonsemestering to take account of the fact that some subjects lend themselves more easily to semestering than others, and to take care of the social needs of our students. I have this awful feeling about chunking education. Whatever is not included in the description of the chunk suddenly becomes unimportant. I feel that semestering contributes to that chunking notion.

As far as OSIS is concerned, we did take the sense that most of it is directed at our secondary system rather than our elementary system, although I realize that grades 7 and 8 are considered part of the intermediate division. Our major feelings on some of the topics are expressed in our report. Perhaps the strongest feeling that we have relates to the apparent change in philosophy from kindergarten to grade 6, where many of our documents speak of active

learning environments and individualization. Suddenly, we are into OSIS, where we are much more product and content oriented.

We have welcomed the opportunity to present our ideas to the select committee on education and we would like to end our spoken part by saying that although, of course, there are issues to be considered, we are in fact proud of the effectiveness of the system in which we operate. We hope our discussions will help to keep it relevant for those students and for those teachers and adults who will use it in the future. If we have created any questions or any doubts, we will be more than glad to try to expand on what we have said.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you. No member has yet indicated he wants to ask a question, so in that vacuum I myself have a couple I would like to put to you.

You talked about students being required to make their choices at too early an age, too soon in their lives. As principals, along with your teachers, I am sure you provide a lot of advice to them as they make those decisions. Some have argued that the majority of grade 8 students take the position that they want to do advanced level courses unless those courses are beyond their ability. Others have said that most students make those decisions based on what they want to do after secondary school.

Can you give us any indication as to what you think about the proportion of students who take either position?

Mr. Buckley: My immediate reaction is that in a lot of cases it is not the student who makes the decision; it is the parent who makes the decision, based on all kinds of factors that may not even be connected to education.

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The Vice-Chairman: Could you elaborate on that?

Mr. Buckley: Yes. If anyone else in the group would like to join in, please do. There is a real sense that the old business—and in a sense it contradicts what we said before—of having to pass grade 8 to get into a general or advanced program at least put some sort of restrictions on the kinds of things that parents expect of their children. There seems to be a drift now towards the idea that parents of elementary school students do not have to take a great deal of notice of what the elementary school staff suggests but are free to make their own decisions about the level at which their child enters high school.

Mr. Geddes: They also quite often make those decisions based on the fact they believe very firmly that they want what is best for their child in society and they, to use a cliché, often go for the golden ring thinking the professions are possibly what they wish their child to end up in. In my experience as a principal, if we could have done one thing in a far more positive way—I am saying this as a personal opinion and also on behalf of the parents in my schools—we should be doing a much stronger job of promoting or marketing the trades in our province, the technical skills, and helping our parents to realize that those are also golden rings in their own right.

Mrs. Parker: We also have to take into consideration that it is not any one final decision; there are the parent, student and teacher aspirations for each of these children who are selecting courses. Most people who really care are working towards helping the child keep every option open that he possibly can at that point in his life.

The Vice-Chairman: Is it common to have students for whom you recommend an advanced program select general level courses instead? Does that happen very often?

Mrs. Parker: It does happen.

Mr. Buckley: It does happen, but not as often as the other way around, where we recommend general and the parent selects advanced.

The Vice-Chairman: Some members have now indicated they want to ask questions, so I will go to them.

Mr. Mahoney: One of the things I always love about these processes when you analyse systems is that all the buzzwords come out, and you have given us a new one: chunking. Anyway, I had not heard it.

Mr. Buckley: It is not a buzzword. It is probably one of my own slang terms. I simply use it in describing content in such a way that this is in the course and this is not and in order to get this credit, you have to know this amount of information.

Mr. Mahoney: I understand that and I agree with you that just putting a chunk of information in front of a student and saying, "Learn that and do not come out of the grade until you have it mastered"—it is the system most of us went through, but I am not sure it is the appropriate way to go, so I tend to agree.

In your preamble, you talked about involving parents more, and in July when we had our hearings many of the people who came in talked about getting the parents and schools and

everybody more active. One of the feelings I have is that the parents you need to involve are usually the ones you cannot involve or the ones you have the most difficult time getting involved. In Simcoe, have you come up with any creative ways of going after that?

When I went to school, they called them the two-percenters. They were the guys who were really the problem, and I suspect that percentage has not changed a whole lot today. But how do you get to those two-percenters? How do you get to the parents, particularly in today's society when either both are working or perhaps only one is around and they are under tremendous strain and pressure? How do you get them to take an interest in their kids' education and get involved?

Mr. Geddes: There are a couple of avenues there. In an elementary school in a small community, we are very lucky in that we have very positive support staffs around us from community service groups. They help and there is a lot of communication there. We have also been very lucky in the very distant past, and possibly this year, in Collingwood, which is my home town. We started an alternative school which is concentrating on exactly that two per cent and we have had positive results.

Mr. Buckley: Also, there is a direct connection between what the parent perceives the school does to and for the child while the child is in school. The more you can begin, as we do with many of our kindergarten entry programs and early identification programs and so on—if you can start that kind of parent-school partnership early and find ways not to alienate the parents along the way, you end up with a bigger support group as you go through.

I have a real sense also that some of our parents literally turn off because they do not feel the particular needs of their own particular children are being met.

Mrs. Mangoff: If I may, I think the majority of parents who do not come to the school have had unfortunate school experiences. They are intimidated by the school. I think the answer is to get yourself out of the school on to their home ground where they are comfortable.

Mr. Mahoney: That is a great answer, actually, that last one particularly; we talked about that with the identification and placement review committees. You go into a room and if you are lucky your spouse and you have 85 people across there saying, "So we are going to analyse Johnny today."

Mrs. Mangoff: Some of our teachers have gone through this.

Mr. Mahoney: That is right; we are going to scare the heck out of Johnny's parents. Maybe the buzzwords, too, because I do not know that parents today understand all of the streaming, semestering and grouping, chunking and everything else we do with our kids.

On streaming, you made an interesting comment, that if it were eliminated, you would eliminate the competition that occurs perhaps from a general to a basic and from an advanced to a general, to a basic. I assume that is what you are referring to. I totally agree that we are asking 12-year old kids and uninitiated parents to make a decision about whether or not their child is going to go on to post-secondary education or take whatever courses. That is a very unfair situation. But are you really going to eliminate competition by eliminating streaming?

Mr. Buckley: No. If I said that, if that is how it sounded, it is not what I meant to say. First of all, the competition that is set up by streaming is not a competition between streams. There are definite social advantages or disadvantages in being in a particular stream, depending on which one you are in.

I think competition against other people for the sake of some passing and some failing is a dangerous position for us to get into. I think "competition" is not even the right word. There is self-improvement—to be the best I can be kinds of competition for my own sake and for my own future. Those are the kinds of things I would like to encourage in students, rather than, "Can I get 92 and get into X University, or if I am stuck with 89.5, do I only get into this one?"

Mr. Mahoney: Being a little bit of a devil's advocate, is being the best I can be not a little too Sesame Street? Is it reality when they have to go out there in the real world and deal with some people who are better at mathematics or better at English than they are, or whatever?

Mr. Buckley: I confess to being a dreamer, if you like. I confess to being an idealist. Without wishing to be critical, I think the kinds of statements from those who would advocate streaming and competition come from the kinds of people who are still having difficulty with getting away from that system.

Many of our teachers are still in that mindset where they have to rely on marks, content and progress and so on, simply because it is a safe place to be. It is very easy to say to somebody who took a mathematics test, "You did this and you did not do that; therefore, you fail."

It is much more difficult to say, "If you had approached this mathematical problem in this

way, I would have been more impressed with your higher-level thinking processes." That is not measurable. Therefore, it is not communicable to parents and it is an unsafe place to be, but I think it is an essential place to be eventually.

Mr. Mahoney: Thanks very much. I enjoyed your presentation.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I have a couple of questions. I guess one observation is that although the majority of the groups that are coming before the committee are taking a very progressive approach to education, one wonders why, if that is the general thinking and the leadership of our educational community, that the actual reality of what is happening in the classroom, at least the perception of what is happening in the classroom, is so much further behind the leadership.

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I want to pick up on one point you just said to Mr. Mahoney, that you want to be an idealist and you want to reach for perfection. If that is the case—and I think certainly from your brief that is the case—would it be appropriate for this committee to look seriously and perhaps recommend that grades actually should be eliminated? I do not think all of the other ideals that are in your brief and in many of the other briefs can be achieved as long as we still have this artificial thing called grades.

Mr. Buckley: I think that is a fair comment. The report on the early childhood education project—we refer to it as the yellow book—suggested, and I have heard it here this afternoon, an ungraded primary division where children enter school, heaven forbid, on their fifth birthday rather than on the first of September, whereby they can gain a certain number of basic needs and skills before they move out into the real world of higher learning, as you put it.

I personally feel we could eliminate grades, because they really are an artificial thing. We could eliminate grades at least all the way through elementary school and probably in secondary school. In secondary school, even more so, with our selection processes and so on, they are very much a convenient name for what is really a sequential development of courses that follow one after the other.

Mrs. Parker: If you made a recommendation such as that, though, you would have to have something to put in its place that would ensure—

Mr. D. S. Cooke: That it is possible.

Mrs. Parker: —that there was some recognition of progress and accomplishment. You

cannot make a blanket recommendation without some options in its place.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Yes. I think a lot of the "ifs" that the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association put on during the last presentation would have to be in place before it could happen.

Mrs. Mangoff: I think it would be a very difficult thing for a society to take. I was fortunate enough to work in a school at one time that was not graded. It was an experiment and the parents kept coming and saying, "What grade is she in?" It would be the parents who could not accept it. It is what they are used to. It would be very difficult, but I think it would be fantastic.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I am sure that would be part of the difficulty, but on the other hand, I would hate for this committee to produce a report that did not have some risk-taking and some vision involved in it. Otherwise, what is the purpose? Do you have senior elementary schools in your system?

Mr. Buckley: No, we do not. Just in the odd, unusual case in the county where buildings have not been appropriate in the past, but generally we are a K-to-8 system.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: We have had some people come before the committee who have recommended that the intermediate level actually be a separate school from grades 7 to 10, although there are some of us who have had experiences with senior elementary schools that have been less than positive.

Mr. Geddes: We have had positive experiences with them when they have existed. However, one of the really positive things about an elementary school in a K-to-8 situation is it still maintains the sense of family, which is so very important. You have big brother taking little sister to school and the pulling-together process, which the senior elementary schools tend to definitely take away from.

Mr. Buckley: I think in a basically rural county like ours, K-to-8 is the only way to go in terms of gathering together enough kids to make a school. But there is no question in my mind, having worked in both, that the family notion and the big ones looking after the little ones kind of notion are very important to the social development of all the children.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I agree.

Mr. Buckley: The other thing, just to throw in an extra point here, is that I feel one of the major needs—and I speak personally now, not for the association—that our school system province-wide needs a major public relations campaign to

tell people what we really do well, because we do so many things so well and we allow ourselves to be shot down by people who pick on one little area and make a big thing out of it.

The Vice-Chairman: Mr. Owen has joined us for the afternoon and he has indicated he has a question.

Mr. Owen: Just briefly, I have one commendation and one brief question. The commendation is that you are acknowledging what you and your board are trying to do with regard to the trades in encouraging recognition of the esteem that graduates in the trades should have in the community and the need. In my areas, I know the schools have been co-operating very much, not only with your own ministry but with the Ministry of Skills Development, and also in preparation for some of the work that is going on in the colleges and universities. I commend you that this is taking place. I realize it has not been easy, but I really think what you are doing in the county is great.

With regard to my question about streaming, I have heard what you have said. I have had others tell me that what you are expressing some reservation about has been taking place for many years in other countries. I have not visited these other countries to see, but they refer me to Japan, Britain or parts of Europe and say that in these areas it is a necessity for their system to work. It overcomes some of the problem we have had. I know at least one of you has more experience in that area than I have had. I am not saying what they are saying is accurate or true, but this is an argument given to me. I am wondering what your comments would be.

Mr. Buckley: I missed the beginning, that streaming is necessary or that streaming is unnecessary?

Mr. Owen: The argument I have been given outside of here is that what is being proposed is inevitable and necessary.

Mr. Buckley: Right. My idealistic answer is that is the stance taken by people who see the institution as the deliverer and the child as the receiver, whereas I choose to see the child as the demander and the institution as the provider and, therefore, the institution sets itself up according to what the child needs, not on a predetermined set of what other people consider to be useful.

Mrs. Parker: As a response to that question, with regard to the English system, one of the researchers from Britain, Peter Lorimer, made a presentation to a group of teachers. In that, he indicated that streaming works well for the

children who come from upper-middle-class and upper-class homes, because early in their life they have had books in their home, have had the cultural background and have learned how to "jump through hoops." They know the system. Their parents went through it and they succeeded. Streaming works extremely well for people who are advantaged to begin with. Streaming does not work as well for students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, from homes that have been not able to provide or, for some reason or another, have not seen the need to provide this kind of stimulation.

Mr. Owen: The late bloomers.

Mrs. Parker: Yes, they do not bloom until they have had an opportunity to be exposed to that. I think there is a real danger in saying that it is the best system we have. We have to examine very carefully how best we can help the children who are in our society today.

The Vice-Chairman: There is not a lot of time left. Mrs. O'Neill, do you have a question?

Mrs. O'Neill: Yes, I do. I would like to pick up the discussion I had with the previous group of teachers. You have suggested, on folio 9 of your presentation, that you would like to see a guidance counsellor in every elementary school. It is likely you are all doing guidance yourselves as principals. Is that correct?

Mrs. Parker: Yes.

Mr. Buckley: Oh, yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: Have you taken it upon yourselves or do you assign this to other members of your staff? How are you handling it? Most of your schools are relatively small, if I have the correct knowledge of your county.

Mr. Buckley: In the rural areas, certainly, but some of our town schools are of a comparable size with city schools. I think one of the difficulties is the fact that for me guidance is not a subject; it is all interwoven with the way we raise our children, both as teachers and as parents. In that sense, I give the responsibility to the rest of my teachers. There are some situations I am not qualified to deal with.

Mrs. O'Neill: Do you see professional development in your board as a rather high-profile need?

Mrs. Parker: I see individual teachers responding to that need, particularly teachers who are at this point in time teaching in the intermediate division as a result of OSIS and the implications there. I have a guidance background, so I find it easy to work with children,

but you cannot schedule them in and say, "You and I will sit down and do guidance at 9:05." It is a spontaneous growth and it is a spontaneous need.

A child comes in and he needs a warm, caring individual who has some skills in guidance counselling. We are not just looking at helping children select courses when they enter high school. We are looking at social and emotional development. In our society today, when so many children are trying to work through problems at home or at school, they need someone onsite when the problem hits, not when they are scheduled at 3:05 in the afternoon. That is why it is important to have onsite counsellors.

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Mrs. O'Neill: This is an overlay teacher.

Mrs. Parker: That is right.

Mrs. O'Neill: You feel that would take on the same role as a remedial teacher? Do you feel this person could be occupied or would he become an itinerant teacher?

Mrs. Parker: Are you asking if there is enough for a person to do on a day-to-day basis? Yes.

Mr. Buckley: There is plenty to do.

Mrs. O'Neill: In every elementary school?

Mr. Buckley: Definitely.

Mrs. Parker: Regardless of size.

Mr. Buckley: I think if you extend the role to helping the child in all the fields in which the child finds himself or herself, if you extend the counsellor role to the family, for example, there is more than enough.

Mr. Geddes: In rural Ontario, quite often the school takes on a lot of the social services which are given in the large cities. As a result, the teacher, although a teacher in the classroom, is quite often the parent, the minister, the priest, the children's aid society worker or whatever else happens to be going at that very moment. It is crucial that this person be available to the child when that child most needs him.

Mrs. O'Neill: So your description of guidance is much beyond that which is mandatory in grade 7 and 8?

Mr. Buckley: Absolutely.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Should this person be a teacher?

Mr. Buckley: Either that or a social worker, I think. A lot of these suggested creative solutions to the dropout problem, for example, have identified that many of those students who drop

out in the lower age levels of high school can be identified perhaps as low as grade 2 or grade 3 as potential difficulties. The notion that problems do not begin until grade 7 is not true any more and we need people who can relate to younger children and bring them along in a preventive sense.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think one other presenter has made that point with us and I think it is a point very well taken.

The Vice-Chairman: We may hear it again as well. Mr. Buckley, thank you very much and the other members of the Simcoe County Elementary Principals' Association. We appreciate your contribution to the process.

Our next presentation is by the British Heritage Institute. I believe Mr. Thom and Dr. Blyth are both here. Welcome back to the select committee on education. I recall your last presentation before us and the interesting discussion that followed it. We have about half an hour this afternoon, if you would like to proceed.

BRITISH HERITAGE INSTITUTE

Mr. Thom: Thank you very much for this opportunity to bring to your attention, on behalf of the British Heritage Institute, concerns regarding the organization of education in Ontario, along with a number of what we believe to be positive, realistic suggestions to meet the inevitable challenges of the very near future.

First, may I introduce my aide for this afternoon, Jack Blyth, whose sole purpose is to help me, as I regret that several disabilities, including a better than 50 per cent loss of hearing, could make for possible difficulties in this presentation. Jack will serve the very useful purpose of being an extra pair of ears for me.

Having studied most of your biographies, ladies and gentlemen, I note that the professions of teaching and social work are pre-eminent and I am delighted to meet you as a fellow professional, a teacher and a social worker. My credentials include degrees and qualifications from Edinburgh, London and Toronto. I began teaching in 1947 in Britain and in 1954 in Canada. This work has included experience with every age group from kindergarten to post-graduate university, as well as diagnostic and remedial work in the British-approved school system and also in public schools.

I taught psychology from 1956 to 1959 at the Toronto Teachers' College and from 1959 to 1968 at the Lakeshore Teachers' College. From 1968 to 1981, I was an elementary school

principal. I qualified also as a public school inspector in Ontario.

I was a director and past president of Big Brothers of Oakville in its early days and was a founding member, director and past president of the Oakville branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

I wrote the brief to the Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital recommending the establishment of a psychiatric unit. I also wrote and presented the programs Meet Your School-Aged Child and Meet Your Teenager, both programs sponsored by the Canadian Mental Health Association and the home and school association.

It is not my intention to read part A of this brief, entitled "Defects and Deficiencies." Instead, let me go on to part B, which I think is highly relevant to what you are looking at. By the way, part A, "Defects and Deficiencies," is about certain concerns we have. As you are well aware, we could go on almost indefinitely accumulating material regarding defects and deficiencies.

However, we will look at the second part, which I believe to concern itself with the situation as it is now and certainly as it could be: "2000 AD Threat or Promise?" The 21st century is only 11 years or 134 months away, yet between the present and the dawn of that new century, technological advances can change our entire mode of life almost out of recognition. We cannot assume that what is valid today will be current next year or even six months from now. For example, computer manufacturers regularly destroy brand-new machines still in their factory packing as their technological advances render the model of one year obsolescent 12 months hence.

Can the current educational system meet the obvious challenges of a fast-moving, unpredictable world where industrial competition depends on research and development and the prizes go to the innovative, the bold and the creative? The answer is, "Yes, we can," and "No, we cannot." Yes, we can, if we are prepared to accept that extensive ongoing reorganization to the educational system is essential. No, we cannot, if we insist on an ultraconservative, no-change attitude. Incidentally, one thing that is predictable is the fact that much is unpredictable.

The first suggestion regarding reorganization depends on a change of attitude. The current educational system, dominated by the Ministry of Education which virtually dictates curriculum, must appreciate that the educational machine is

in fact a service industry. The consumer is the learner. The products to be retailed are the subjects of the curriculum. The branch organizations are the school boards with the schools as their distribution agents. The best-selling book, *In Search of Excellence*, which I am sure you have all read, explains that highly successful companies are close to the customer. This can hardly be said of the educational establishment in Ontario.

Curriculum, the product to be retailed, is decided in the ministry by specialists. There is a take-it-or-leave-it flavour about this which reminds me of the North American car manufacturers in the late 1950s and 1960s whose products were large, ugly, gas-guzzling abominations, but with the advent of smaller, economical, well-designed cars from overseas, we very quickly found in this country how these monstrosities of the 1950s and 1960s were replaced by what has evolved today.

As I said, there was a total indifference at that time to the wishes of the consumers. Today if a learner, his parents or other concerned person tries to make his or her concerns known to those in charge, a lengthy path must be followed which as often as not results in sustained frustration. The ministry is dominant, and parents who have placed their children in private schools believing that there was a greater freedom of curriculum there found there was, in fact, no freedom of choice. The teaching of British history is a case in point where special, limited permission was granted for a short time, to be withdrawn completely later. The branch offices, that is, the school boards, cannot exercise real initiative in curriculum lest they offend the ministry, leading to cancellation of funds.

We know that the teachers of Ontario and their school boards can effect rapid real change. This was more than adequately demonstrated in 1968 when the Hall-Dennis report became a blueprint for change. It took several years to achieve, but the efforts of the people in the field, almost completely unaided by the Department of Education, now the Ministry of Education, turned potential chaos into the system we see today.

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Only one aspect of change evaded them. That was the curriculum. At short notice, the demands of a new system could not produce local involvement in curriculum design. The ministry once again got into the act and holds sway today. To bring about the organizational changes necessary to meet the challenges of a constantly evolving society, curriculum must be reviewed.

Some subjects—for example, history and geography, largely neglected or replaced by social studies—need to be reinstated. There is need for both conservation and innovation. Whatever is decided, change must be planned and adequate time allowed.

We submit, however, there is no time to waste. The consumer has to be involved in the change. Whatever is decided, there must never again be the shortsighted changeover experienced in 1968 when solutions had to be imported from Britain and elsewhere, whether they were applicable to our situation here in Ontario or not. We suggest organizational planning be undertaken as soon as possible.

Let me carry on then with several changes that we recommend. I want to begin with number 3 on the sheet there, the development of individualized learning programs using modern technology suitable for students, looking at the situation from grade 7 on.

This brings us to the whole business of streaming, about which you have been listening to the previous delegation. Streaming can be undertaken, as I am sure you are aware, in many ways. The most primitive way is what I call the mainstream, and that is the sort of thing that went on when I was at school, many moons ago. At that time, there was no attempt made to differentiate children in a class. Every kid in the class got the same intellectual menu. The results were inevitably the same.

The bright ones were always at the head of the class. Those who were slower, with learning difficulties, whatever their origin might be, were at the tail-end of the class. In between was this group which one, for want of a better word, calls the average mass of youngsters, whose position changed very little. Month in and month out, the positions of those who were at the top and those who were at the bottom were relatively static. There was absolutely no change, because this type of, as I called it mainstream, resulted in a type of competition that was completely unreal. It was a competition where you pitted intellectual lightweight against intellectual heavyweights, and if any of you gentlemen have ever done any boxing, you know what the result was.

Competition has its place, as long as it is between equals. I believe there is a place for it, because our world as a whole today is a place of competition, but as people we well know the competition in our world is, again, competition between equals. We compete with those who are our fellow professionals or people who are in the same mode of work as ourselves. One does not

find, for example, high court judges competing with people who do some of the more menial work in our society. There is competition at differentiated levels.

That was the earliest and crudest type of streaming, and it, thank goodness, died a lingering death a long time ago. We then usually got into three streams, differentiated as A, B and C. The brighter youngsters were funnelled into an A stream, the average group fell into a B stream and those with learning difficulties of one kind or another went into a C stream. There were problems associated with this, but it is a much more realistic method of differentiating, because we keep coming back to this point, and I must emphasize this, that schools are for kids. A great deal is forgotten in this whole educational business. We sometimes think that organization is the be-all and end-all of schools, and administration is the be-all and end-all.

The only reason that I ever had a job, the Minister of Education has a job, the inspector, superintendents, directors of education and everybody else has a job is to teach Johnny to read. This is the purpose of the entire system. It is important, as I pointed out in the preamble to this, that the curriculum, that which is designed for children, be within the possibilities of some degree of understanding, some degree of learning capacity of those to whom it is presented. Otherwise, on the one hand, you are going to have total frustration and, on the other hand, total boredom.

We go one step further. The next step in this business of streaming is individualizing of programs. Up to comparatively recent times, individualizing of programs was an incredibly difficult job. It could be done within certain narrow limits. I have done it with reasonable success. I am talking about a stage just prior to the advent of modern technology.

Modern technology has opened up a tremendous area still relatively unexplored, but you will notice from the handout you have that we are already starting to use it in our schools in Ontario. I submit that modern technology has an immense part to play if, in fact, we are going to try to meet the needs of children in this type of changing society that confronts us.

What do I envisage with regard to this type of individualized program? I see the use of computers, videotape recorders, radio, television, satellites, and I see the schools themselves changing their mode of operation. I can see a vast amount of learning taking place at home, because as you know, youngsters in our world today are

conversant with all the modern technological advances in a way that I have to struggle to keep up with. The youngest children are television conscious, and they are conscious of the way to handle material of this kind almost as soon as they are able to toddle.

There is real need to put this to greater use in terms of the educational process. This is where, as I say, much learning can be done at home. A vast amount of planning has to take place. One of the questions that people will ask is, "Well, what happens about the social content?" The school is still there. By the use of modern technology, programmed instruction can be undertaken at home, where the learning is monitored. The children would go to school, where they would take part in a discussion program, seminars. They do not have to sit sometimes by the hour listening to immensely dull teachers.

One of the great advantages of this system is that you can learn on the spot. For example, if you are learning about the Industrial Revolution, you can take children to Coalbrookdale in England where it all started, and bring them back to this country by use of satellite and what have you to see the industrial complexes that we have, whether it be in Windsor, Hamilton or up in the Sault. These things can become realistic.

The children can be exposed to some of the best teaching brains, both across this country and certainly in Europe, by dint of the use of technology. There is in fact no reason this cannot be done.

I strongly suggest, ladies and gentlemen, that we have already made a start. Some of our universities are making use of televised programs. Channel 19 presents a great number of televised programs, and as I said, you will see in the material that was distributed to you that our schools are getting hooked up by means of computer across the province. That is the first step, I believe, towards this individualizing of learning program.

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Let me carry on, then, to the first of the items under this suggested organizational planning. I think it is time we had local curriculum committees. I think local curriculum committees should involve a great deal of input from people within the community. These would be people who have an obvious interest in the programs which are being presented in the schools. I would suggest that one would have to be very careful about the establishment of these committees so that there was proportional representation and

not an overloading of committees by any one or other pressure group.

Moving on from that to number 2, I suggest that there be local boards of governors for schools. If there were local boards of governors for schools working along with the school board, the school board would be responsible for many of the policies, but in the everyday operation of schools, for example, in the implementation of dress codes and helping the principal and teachers in the operation of schools, local boards of governors could go a long way toward bridging the gap between the school and the community.

I am not suggesting for one minute that we are ready to go as far as they are going in the United Kingdom. If you have read recently what is happening in England, it is totally and absolutely revolutionary, where individual schools will be given their budget from the central authority and will be responsible for everything under the sun.

For example, a typical urban high school in England will have a budget of \$3.5 million, between \$6 million and \$7 million, and the principal of that school will be totally responsible for everything, from having new washers put on the washroom taps to the paying of teachers' salaries and all things in between.

In other words, the central authority, namely, the ministry, would short-circuit the local committees. There is a great deal of politics involved in this, obviously, but this is a means of short-circuiting many of the local education committees over there who have obviously not fulfilled entirely the interests of the parents or children.

Let's go on to point 4. I suggest that there is need for an educational ombudsman. This is a person to whom the public would have access. It is incredibly difficult, if one has genuine problems which cannot be met by the local school board and wants to take them to the highest authorities in the Ministry of Education. One can approach people like yourselves to try and arrange interviews. Sometimes this works; sometimes it does not work. I have already been involved in this process and experienced some degree of frustration.

I believe this concept of an educational ombudsman or ombudsmen—Incidentally, ladies, I mean no insult to you with the word "ombudsman." I do not know if there is a feminine equivalent of it, but I think you will realize what we are talking about. "ombudsman" also means "Ombudswoman," if one dare encroach on a foreign language in that respect.

These could be appointed either locally or provincially. If this sort of route was followed, I would suggest that these ombudspeople, as with the governors and the committees, as far as possible are nonpolitical and nonpartisan. I think this has to be done in order that there is no heavy emphasis on the part of any one person, group, party or whatever in terms of meeting the needs.

Number 5 follows from number 4. Again, we suggest that review teams to look at the complaints which are brought to the attention of the ombudsmen are in place. These are people who have no axe to grind in terms of the educational system but who will be able to go and look very closely at all aspects of the complaint, get all sides of any problem and come back to the ombudsman, making suggestions. He or she will be able to take this material to the minister or to the appropriate officials to make sure that action is taken.

Let's look at number 6, the need for ongoing curriculum review. We suggest there is tremendous need to restore history and geography to the elementary schools. I suggest that we need to develop courses in thinking. You will find among the material that has been given to you that there is a biography of one Edward de Bono who is one of the foremost protagonists of lateral thinking. As you will read, de Bono is a person whose services have been used extensively in the British educational system and who has actually designed courses in thinking for children at school.

If you are interested in what lateral thinking is all about, most of us are aware of vertical thinking. This is the type of thinking which takes place in most schools. In other words, you go from step A to step B and so on to the solution of your problem.

Lateral thinking is the kind of thinking where you often begin at a different end of a problem entirely. Instead of looking to see how to make the thing work, you look to see why it would not work and you work at it. You are looking at the problem from various points of view and coming back. This type of thinking is one that has a great deal to do with the creative process. One sees this associated a great deal with people who are creative, people who are inventive and people who are not locked into one way of thinking.

I am not for a moment suggesting there is not a place for both vertical and lateral thinking in schools. We need to know how to use both. I suggest for the moment that there is a greater emphasis on vertical thinking rather than on the horizontal type.

I suggest too that there is a tremendous need for an understanding of ethics. I think that it is most interesting that in many of the schools of business administration, the introduction of ethics has become a compulsory subject. Without an understanding of ethics it becomes very difficult for people to really appreciate the ins and outs and the ups and downs of life in a very competitive type of business in the professional world, such as we see today.

I would also recommend that even at the elementary school level there is a place for economics. I am not talking about the development of economic systems such as the development of Marxism or the development of capitalism. I am suggesting very elementary principles of economics such as the concept of margin. There is a point beyond which things cease to be profitable in almost any type of enterprise. There is the law of diminishing returns. In other words, if you keep on putting up the price of beer, people are not going to drink beer. They are going to find something else. The law of diminishing returns takes over.

Young people should begin to appreciate these things. I would like to emphasize that one of our problems in North America is the gross underestimation of the intellectual capacity of young people. Young people have a fantastic capacity to appreciate and understand many things that we simply put off to a later stage in their schooling.

For example, when I started my life as a principal in 1968, I introduced Shakespeare to a grade 5 class. They lapped it up. You introduce Shakespeare in an interesting manner. A theory that I have maintained for years is that there are no dull subjects, but there are heck of a lot of dull teachers. There is not a subject today that cannot be made interesting if some effort is made on the part of those who are presenting the curriculum.

At that same time, I introduced them to Latin because if you understand Latin, an awful lot of the understanding of English simply follows a path. If you understand Latin, you can lead into an understanding of French and an understanding of Spanish. Elementary school kids can get their teeth into this and they enjoy it. There is a vast amount that we simply do not do with younger children because, as I say, we literally insult their intelligence.

1610

Looking again back to item 6, the development of responsibility, I do not know if you are aware or if you have noticed that increasingly in our society there is an attitude of: "Somebody else is responsible for my actions. If I do

something stupid, I look to somebody else to pick up the bits and pieces. I refuse to accept the responsibility for my actions as a person." It ties in, I am sure, with ethics, but I believe we need to encourage children to recognize that, as they mature, there is an increasing need to become responsible for their own actions and not to expect somebody else at the end of the day to bail them out, simply because their decision has been a faulty one.

Number 7 reads, "Organize for accountability at all levels." I think that applies throughout the entire educational system, not just to the Minister of Education who, like Harry Truman, the buck does not go further than. I think if people, whether they are working in a board office or in schools or, of course, are parents—because I would argue, ladies and gentleman, that the most important teachers children ever have are their own parents—if all accept their degree of accountability for their part in this educational process, then great improvements can be made in this whole educational setup.

Because I am in love with the English language, I think that number 8, the understanding of the English language, is absolutely critical, particularly as we get into this free trade agreement with our American president across the way. We have Canada, a small English-speaking nation, and the United States, probably the biggest English-speaking nation on the face of the earth, and the need to enjoy, understand and communicate adequately in English becomes extremely important.

In that respect, ladies and gentlemen, I do not know if you have read this book or you have seen the television program, *The Story of English*. If you want to understand history, if you want to understand Canada, if you want to understand how the English language itself has developed, grab that book and try to follow it whatever television channel it happens to be shown on, try to follow it. You may not be able to follow all the various episodes but, to my mind, it is one of the best ways of learning history and it is certainly one of the best ways of learning English.

I know there are other people waiting in the wings so I would, at this point, welcome any questions or any comments that you have.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Thom. We can tell that you are very enthusiastic about your subject by the fact that you have expired all your time and there is virtually none left for questions. However, if Mr. Mahoney will promise to keep his question very brief, I think we could entertain one; and perhaps you could

extend the courtesy to the next presenters by keeping your answer as brief as possible as well.

Mr. Mahoney: I recognize the time constraints, so I will have to leave a lot of the questions I have, particularly on the first part, and I will limit it to your seven points. I have always somehow recognized that we are all, in a sense, levels of government. The individual is one, the family is one, and so it goes right up in the community.

But I am somewhat concerned about the creation of additional bureaucracy, which I would see off the top in your local curriculum committee and a board of governors for schools, when we have what are called different things but, in essence, are parent-teacher associations and teacher organizations within schools that do meet and discuss both curriculum and the activities in the school and after school. This type of thing goes on.

I would be a little concerned and perhaps ask for your response in regard to the creating of what I would see as additional levels of bureaucracy.

Mr. Thom: Madam Chairman, may I respond to this?

Madam Chairman: You may.

Mr. Thom: I do not see necessarily that you are stacking one on top of the other. I do not see that we have to maintain all these levels simply because they happen to be there. I realize that one of the problems of people in government is maintaining the status quo. I do not see that there is need all the way along because something new evolves that we have to hang on to it necessarily. I can see, as a consequence of innovation, that there are other things that can be modified and, in fact, done away with.

Mr. Mahoney: Like PTAs, you are suggesting?

Mr. Thom: PTAs?

Mr. Mahoney: Are you suggesting that a parent-teacher association or relationship be eliminated in favour of a curriculum committee?

Mr. Thom: No, I am not suggesting anything. I am merely suggesting to stack things one on top of the other—this is the sort of thing where planning is essential; planning in order to see those things that perhaps can be done away with. Perhaps the PTA becomes part of this curriculum thing; I do not know. All I am suggesting is that this is something that I certainly believe in, the type of situation we see evolving, and I do not necessarily see an increase of bureaucracy. God forbid that we do.

Mr. Mahoney: Just very quickly, on item 3, you refer to grades 7 to 13. Are you advocating senior public schools as the best system or do you prefer, although you have not mentioned it, K to 8 and grades 9 to 12 and/or 13 or Ontario academic courses?

Mr. Thom: I used grades 7 to 13 really because of the age range. I used 7 to 13 because I see within that age range, one would hope, that there is enough self-discipline to sit down and get on with the studies. That is the reason for that.

Madam Chairman: Just before you go, gentlemen, for the record, I did the report card in your appendix and I got six out of six right without even looking at the multiple choices. So there you go. I can answer them.

Mr. Mahoney: So did I.

Madam Chairman: We are just a very bright group and remember history.

Mr. Thom: You are exceptional students.

Madam Chairman: That gives me a perfect lead-in for our next group. Thank you. I will now call on the Association for Bright Children.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I thought I was exceptional.

Mr. Mahoney: Not in that way.

Madam Chairman: I am not sure that exceptionally bad counts.

Mr. Mahoney: Now, now.

Madam Chairman: We have had Mrs. Walker with us on a number of occasions so we are looking forward to getting her specific input on behalf of the bright children of the province. I do not even have to explain the procedure to you; I am sure you know it. For the benefit of your colleagues, I will just mention that perhaps you would identify yourself for purposes of electronic Hansard, and then begin whenever you are ready.

ASSOCIATION OF BRIGHT CHILDREN

Mrs. Walker: Thank you very much, Madam Chair and members of the select committee. It is nice to be back here again. I will not be back again for a while, I do not think.

On my left is Margaret Carter, who is a member of our provincial executive and one of the ministry liaison or legislative liaison members of our executive committee. She was very much involved with the questionnaire. I believe you have a copy of the abstract and we have a copy of the full report here, if you would like that for your research purposes and information.

Lee Carter on my right—they are not related—is a member of our provincial executive as well and is the publicity chairman. That does not, however, limit the opportunities, shall we say, within the voluntary organization that she has to participate in. Both Marg and Lee have a great deal of experience, both at the local chapter level and at the provincial level of our executive.

The Ontario Association for Bright Children is very pleased to have this opportunity to come before the select committee and present. As Ms. Poole said, we have been here on several other occasions. On those other occasions we have been here with other parent associations representing exceptional children, and so today our focus will be on the gifted and the bright children whom we particularly represent.

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What I would like to do is go through and briefly highlight some of the information from the document, to discuss the recommendation and, hopefully, leave some time for questions and discussions with the members of the committee.

I think it is extremely important to start our presentation by saying that the Association for Bright Children is a voluntary organization of parents, educators and other members of the community who are interested in the needs of bright and gifted children. We provide support for parents in going through the identification and placement review committee process in trying to determine who is a gifted child: Is their child gifted and what does he need? Also, ABC is the advocacy voice in Ontario for bright and gifted children.

Although that is our main mandate with bright and gifted children, we are also concerned about the education of all children in Ontario, and we support appropriate educational opportunities within the public system for all children.

We were pleased when Bill 82 identified gifted children as exceptional. We believe that they are indeed exceptional and require differentiated programs. There are still many myths in the community about the needs of our children, but we, as parents, know that without support and sometimes drastic intervention, they will not get along on their own.

In Ontario, gifted children are identified by the legislation as exceptional. We are also concerned about those bright children who may not be identified for particular programming but do need enrichment opportunities and other differentiated programs within the curriculum. We believe that there must be a full continuum of

services offered for our exceptional children, from full-time placement in congregated settings to part-time withdrawal for enrichment, and sometimes, for some of these children, remedial opportunities, to in-class enrichment and integration in a regular class.

That placement is something that is extremely important. It must be determined by the needs of the child and certainly in consultation with the parents, very often the child and certainly the educators who are involved. We believe that an education system which offered only one option could not provide for all of the children in Ontario, and we recognize that students, parents and the educators need options.

The results of the ABC questionnaire which we did—and you have a copy of the abstract—show that throughout the province, few of the boards offer a full continuum of services and, in most boards, gifted children are not actually identified until they get into grade 3 or grade 4, and this is usually quite late.

This week I had a call from the mother of a child who is now in grade 1. The parents did not initiate the identification and placement review committee, but an IPRC was held when the child was in kindergarten, because the psychologist and the teacher felt there were some particular needs that this child had, and he probably should be identified as gifted.

I was dismayed, but it was not unusual, to hear that the superintendent of education said, "No, we will not identify your child at this time, because if we identify him, we will be legally responsible to program for him." That is very distressing, but it happens over and over, particularly to parents of young gifted children, but not always just young gifted children.

As in the presentation, I would like to discuss a few areas other than the four you offered us for discussion today. I will take that liberty and begin with primary education.

As I mentioned, most boards in the province do not identify children in the primary division. If you received the copy of our response to the Radwanski report, you will note that there was a copy of our primary position paper at the back of that. If that is not available and you would like copies, I have a copy with me.

Part of our response in terms of the primary, because we recognize that there are many boards in the province that are not willing and may not identify kids at the primary level, is to state that there are some things that should happen, and certainly one of those is the early and ongoing identification process.

In many areas it is used for exceptional children. We believe it should be used for all children in order to take a look at their abilities and then, less so, their needs, but particularly their abilities, to be able to determine what is the best type of programming for them. In addition, we believe there is a need for a flexible progression through the early primary grades, as was identified in the early primary education project, the lovely yellow document, as somebody referred to it earlier, with the tumbling kids on the front.

At the present time, integration seems to be a concept that is getting a great deal of exposure and press. No one would say that integration is not a good thing for many of our children, but I think to reverse that and say that the opposite is true, that there is no need, therefore, for segregated or withdrawal programs, is equally wrong. I think if we ever went to one option, then we would have many of the children in our province harmed. Of course, as I have said many times, options are important.

Underachievement is an area that is very much misunderstood. I think many people look at gifted kids and say: "Gifted children get along and they must get high marks in school. They know what is going to happen." Unfortunately, not all of our children get top grades. Some are underachievers because they do not seem to fit into the process and others become dropouts. That is very much a concern of ours. Certainly, in his report Radwanski did not particularly discuss exceptional children and really left the impression that gifted children do not drop out of school. That is just not true; many of them do.

Our kids need to be understood and accepted for who they are. Unfortunately for some of them, within the school system they develop very poor self-concepts because they do not fit in, nor are they understood.

It is nice to hear the principals talking about guidance. It is an issue within our organization as well. The question was asked in the questionnaire and almost 50 per cent of the respondents talked about guidance being an issue at the secondary level. I do not know what your guidance information was when you were leaving high school or some time during that era, but I think with some of our gifted children it is very much the same: "You have so many options out there. You can do anything. Just choose whatever you'd like." I think our children do need some very specific help.

In terms of my own daughter, she had a wonderful guidance counsellor who really sup-

ported her and helped her identify that it really was okay to be female and want to go into science. She is just loving every minute of university now.

Some of our children need help with social skills as well. Some of them are very verbal and do extremely well academically some times, but they can also talk circles around us and we think of them as being far older than they are. If you have a gifted child or know a gifted child, you will sometimes take a look at him and say, "Why are you doing this?" when in actual fact what he is doing is obviously what any other six-year-old, 12-year-old or 16-year-old will do. I think we forget that sometimes. They do need some help and support.

Some of our kids do not have the opportunity to develop study and research skills, because I do not think you can always develop study and research skills by osmosis. Some of our kids, particularly at the secondary level, very definitely need some support in those areas.

To get on to the four areas that you have requested we talk about, we feel streaming is an effective programming tool which can benefit some students. When we look at the early primary education project, we see how it can be done. Rather than by arbitrarily setting grades by age levels, there are some things that can be done so the kids can move through the information and the curriculum.

Parents of gifted children have expressed the concern that their children feel very isolated within a regular classroom. Some would define giftedness as the top two per cent of the population. If you consider that within a class, then you may not have another friend who has the same interests and ideas you do. I think it is important for those children to have opportunities to come together with other children of like interests. The children may not be the same chronological age all the time, but there is that need. This streaming will help them and support them and ensure they develop towards their potential. Therefore, ABC supports programming at different levels of difficulty at both the elementary and the secondary levels.

We would like to suggest that at the secondary level there is probably a need for an enriched level beyond the advanced level. Many of our secondary schools are offering enriched courses or gifted courses, but they are not recognized by the university. The problem is that for some of our children the marks they receive in a gifted or enriched course do not reflect what they would have received in an advanced course. At the

grade 11, 12 and 13 or OAC level, we see our children dropping out of gifted programming because they need the marks to get into some of the post-secondary courses and in order to obtain scholarships.

I think it is important to know that the children who are gifted come from all economic and social backgrounds. It is important that in the identification process we do throughout the province we do identify those children, and many of them will need support in scholarships to get on to university.

Here, again, guidance counselling is extremely important for the students and their parents. I heard you talking about that earlier. As parents, we need some of the information as to what will happen to our children. If they drop math at grade 9, what are they going to lose? If you have not seen it, the Toronto board developed a wonderful bull's-eye of all of the career options that you lose when you drop math and science at various levels. I think it is important that as parents and as children we know that.

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In dealing with grade promotion, we have to realize that children come to school with different abilities and different levels of accomplishment. Some of our children are reading fluently by the time they get into kindergarten; some other children are not ready to read until they are in grade 3. I think it is very difficult sometimes for those children who fall into either of those extremes to fit in. Some of our children in kindergarten also enjoy the challenge, shall we say, of long division or higher mathematical orders. We have some children who are extremely gifted in mathematics, and for those children to be asked to go over and repeat the one plus one, they would soon tune out of school and might become some of our underachievers. It is very much a concern that we have.

The early childhood education project has talked about flexibility and the need to be able to go through the primary division. I hope that would be able to carry through on into the junior division and the intermediate and secondary division to offer the flexibility within subjects for children to go on.

At the secondary level, in terms of grade promotion and obtaining credits, principals under OSIS do have the responsibility and ability to allow children to take fewer or more hours in a credit. But throughout the province we find this is not implemented and utilized very often. Certainly, for kids and parents going and asking

for this aspect of OSIS to be utilized, it is sometimes a struggle.

In terms of semestering, there were pros and cons. I guess in terms of my own kids, they say, "It's really nice to have all eight subjects all year long because it means I have only four a day and I have two nights to get the homework done." I guess for some others it would be more difficult. There were three issues that really were identified, and there may be more. For some children, the break of almost a year when they are in a semestered system—a year between math in grade 9 and math at grade 10—can be a difficulty, and there certainly is a need for some bridging and transition courses, which I am not sure too many boards are doing at the present time.

In a semestered system, sometimes not all credits are offered at both terms. So for children attempting to accumulate the credits that they want in order to graduate, it may not be possible to get them as easily in a semestered system at times. They may be offered, but in other situations there are not enough students who wish to take the courses, so they are not offered.

Another interesting difficulty that was suggested is that for those children who finish midyear, there are very few post-secondary institutions that offer the opportunity to come in at that time of the year. For some children who really want to continue their education and get on with it, that is a difficulty. I think that is something that could be looked at.

As when we came and presented with the other parent associations, we believe that OSIS is very much an enabling document. There are so many things in OSIS as you go through it. If I showed you my copy, it is all highlighted so that we can see all the things that can be used not only for gifted kids but for others, and in the presentation we have identified several of them.

Guidance: Again, the students may take up to three guidance credits, and I think that is important. There is, again, the provision of more or less time to obtain credit. Modular credits: That is something that is not necessarily done too often, but there are some very interesting things that can be done and are being done throughout the province in that area. The substitution of compulsory credits: It is there for all exceptional children. For those very bright children in those boards where they do not identify children as gifted at the secondary level, it is difficult for them to get the substitution of compulsory credits.

Co-op education programs are thriving all over the province and I think we are seeing some

excellent programs for gifted and very bright kids and all sorts of children in job shadowing and all sorts of things so that they can find out about the opportunities and the careers that are available to them. Work experience, of course, is another area.

Independent study is offered as an option, and that is an extremely important one. I think within, say, a credit of English, if children have studied Shakespeare in the plays that are being studied, it may be more appropriate for part of their time to be able to do an independent study, to work on their own and report back, of course, to the class as to what else was happening at the time of Shakespeare and some of the other authors who were writing at that time.

We feel that OSIS must be fully implemented before there is any suggestion that it be discarded, because I think the opportunities within it for flexibility for all children are extremely valuable.

ABC recognizes that there are excellent teachers in Ontario. There are great numbers of them. These teachers need continuing opportunities to gain new information and strategies.

I think we talked about pre-service, in-service and professional development and the need of that for all teachers. We believe the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, the local boards of education and teacher federations, as well as ourselves as parent associations, need to be involved in developing and ensuring that some of the excellent programs out there are shared.

There are several instances where this is happening. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education holds an annual exemplary practices program, and I think at that time teachers come and have a look at many of the excellent programs which are available throughout the province.

At their last conference, the Council for Exceptional Children showcased programs. It was the most popular room at the conference. All the teachers were sharing their ideas. Not only did teachers come and have an opportunity to gain a new idea, they also had a face to go with that idea and somebody they could call and ask for help and support if they needed it.

The Association for Bright Children was also involved with the Ministry of Education, the Association for the Gifted in Ontario, which is a CEC branch, the Ontario Consultants for the Gifted and OISE in a research-oriented seminar in April and we plan to be involved in that again next year.

Now we would like to go through the recommendations.

Recommendation 1: ABC recommends that all decisions about education focus on the child of Ontario and the provision of opportunities to allow the child to reach his or her potential, no matter what his ability or disability. Therefore, children have to be the focus.

Recommendation 2: ABC recommends that educational planning for all children recognizes the importance and valuable contribution of parents and guardians. We are here because we do feel we have a place in the partnership of education.

Recommendation 3: ABC supports streaming as one of the delivery models at the elementary level and more than one level of difficulty at the secondary level.

Recommendation 4: ABC supports a continuum of special-education programs and services which ensures opportunities for gifted pupils to interact with their chronological and intellectual peers on a regular and appropriate basis at all grade levels. There also is a need, although it is not necessarily identified within that, that acceleration is the most viable option for some children. It is not something for all children, but certainly there are children for whom acceleration is the answer. Our children need intellectual and chronological peers and they also need support in the social and emotional area.

Recommendation 5: ABC supports the early and ongoing identification procedures being developed for all students.

Recommendation 6: ABC supports the identification and placement review committee process, which does ensure participation in decisions about placement of exceptional children.

Recommendation 7: ABC supports guidance as an essential component of each child's education. Guidance counselling must become an integral part of the early school years even earlier than it is presently through OSIS, at grade 7, and continue throughout their educational career.

Recommendation 8: ABC recommends that promotion of pupils must reflect the completion of material by the pupil. This may mean that some pupils will take less time than others to move through a division such as primary or fewer hours at the secondary level.

Recommendation 8: ABC endorses the enforcement of OSIS to ensure that the marks of students studying at an enriched level are reported at the advanced level.

Recommendation 10: ABC recommends that enriched-level courses be added to the current options of basic, general and advanced.

Recommendation 11: ABC recommends that OSIS be fully implemented consistently across the province and, after that, be evaluated.

Recommendation 12: ABC recommends that pre-service, in-service and professional development programs for teachers include information about exceptional pupils and the various techniques and strategies which can be used to enhance their learning.

Recommendation 13: ABC recommends that support personnel be available to work with students, teachers and parents.

Our last recommendation is that the Ministry of Education—the Ministry of Colleges and Universities should, of course, also be included in there—school boards and teacher federations co-operate to encourage the use of innovative teaching strategies and techniques and continue to support the sharing of this information throughout the provinces.

1640

It seems there is a great desire, and we would all like to have a magic solution that would solve all of the problems, both real and perceived, of education in Ontario. Unfortunately, ABC cannot believe that there is one educational program or option that would work for all children. We feel, in your position here, that you have an opportunity to determine the types of things that will make school work for each child.

I just want to add that I think we do have to celebrate our schools. It is extremely important. There are wonderful things going on there. We do have to celebrate and sell our public schools to the community.

If there is time for questions, we will entertain them at this time.

Mr. Mahoney: On the streaming issue, from many of the people who have come before us, much of the discussion that has taken place has been around the issue of whether kids get trapped once they are streamed and particularly when they are streamed young. Our example has been grade 8. You are dealing with kids. In the example you gave, a child should have been identified in kindergarten as being of a particular ilk or talent and should, therefore, then be streamed.

I am really asking for information from your experience in dealing with gifted children. Is there a danger of trapping a child in an area? I mean, you are really backing up streaming by

backing it up right into kindergarten and very early grades of elementary school.

Is this perhaps creating undue pressure on those individuals, rather than giving them a general, sort of holistic type of education up to a certain point—whatever that point is, I really do not know—where they would, perhaps, then be streamed? Or should they be educated holistically along with everyone else and perhaps be taken out for the independent type of studies?

Mrs. Walker: When we talk about identifying children early, it is not necessarily identifying children for a self-contained class at that time. The idea would be, at that time—particularly in most boards in the province which are identifying children in the primary grades—to identify that they need something different, and that there will be a time and a need for some withdrawal programs for enrichment so they have a chance to be together with some other gifted children.

It does not necessarily mean that they are put into a box. That is extremely important to note. Therefore, there is some identification, less formal identification at the primary level, but certainly informal identification in working with parents and letting them know what is happening.

In terms of our kids, the concern we have is that if there is no formal identification—and it does not mean it has to be a congregated class—from one year to the next, we have no way of ensuring that that programming will continue. It is not necessarily that same programming, but something that is appropriate for that child at that time.

That is the value we have with the IPRC process for exceptional children. There is a yearly review, so we take a look at the child. When that process is used appropriately, it does show that there is a need to change.

Mrs. O'Neill: That seems to be the difficulty I have run into in my previous role. I have spoken to your group several times. There is a group of parents with two- and three- and four-year-olds, particularly four-year-olds, who are totally convinced that the public school system is not going to meet their needs. They just seem to be so strong about this that no matter what I or those to whom I have referred them state, they come into the school system very unhappy. Even if they are identified, the public school system as it exists will not serve their needs. I always refer them to your association—

Mrs. Walker: Thank you very much.

Mrs. O'Neill: —because I really do feel somehow there is in some ways a misunderstanding—

ing, especially if it is a first child or an only child. I am wondering if you can tell us how you deal with this and what kind of public relations you do on this kind of situation.

Mrs. Walker: Very definitely, we do not say as an organization, although there may be individual members of our association who believe it, that there is one type of programming that is appropriate for all children. Certainly we would not say that all gifted children must be in a congregated setting from a very early age, because that is not true. There will be some gifted children for whom that is never true, and a congregated setting would not be appropriate for them.

I have had calls, maybe some of which you have submitted or passed on to us, from the parents of two- and three-year-olds, and they do not always like my answer, because I will say: "How important is it and to whom is it important that your child is really gifted? It is very nice that they can do those things, but there are some other things that are really important and you can allow them to explore where they want to explore. The most important thing that you can do as a parent is to love them." It is not always the answer they want. Love them for who they are, accept them for who they are and let them get on with some of the other living.

In terms of school, I think we as an association still have some work to do, and the school boards have a need to talk more and more about what is going on. There have been some wonderful things going on for all of our children. We do that on an individual basis and try to counsel parents, but there are some who do have very different expectations.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think I like your answer quite a bit.

Mrs. Walker: Thank you.

Mr. Mahoney: Since that was a supplementary to my question, I just want to say I really like the answer too.

Mrs. O'Neill: It was a supplementary.

Mr. Mahoney: I hope that type of message does go out there more, because I have had the experience of dealing with parents who are, unfortunately, just so pushy towards putting their children into certain areas, in my layperson's opinion to the child's detriment. That is a great answer but, at the same time I think it is important to identify them.

You are suggesting expanding the streaming concept upward, not just identifying them at the lower grades but creating an enriched level. Do

you run a danger of starting to create more levels? For example, a child who has been identified through an identification and placement review committee as having a learning disability should not necessarily be put in the basic level of education.

Mrs. Walker: I would hope not.

Mr. Mahoney: That is right. And yet, are you going to create a learning disability level as well as an enriched level? Again, you could extrapolate that to various levels.

Mrs. Walker: To answer that, no, I do not think there should be an LD level. We certainly do have some learning-disabled gifted children within the province, and what they need is support within either an advanced or, if there is one, an enriched level to accommodate them to learn in those areas. There are some techniques and strategies being used within the province, particularly for learning-disabled gifted children.

In terms of the enriched, the problem we are seeing right now is that in many areas it is only the kids who are identified as gifted who get into enriched or advanced courses. If there were an opportunity, there probably are many other children in the province who would benefit from an enriched-level course.

Mr. Mahoney: Maybe even in different subjects, I guess you could say.

Mrs. Walker: Oh, absolutely. I think it is very important when children are in secondary school that they do not necessarily take all their options at the gifted or advanced level. In terms of kids who are identified as gifted, that is not appropriate.

Mr. Jackson: Margaret, thank you for an excellent brief. You have caused us to think again, extensively.

On page 3, you make reference to position papers on integration and underachievement. When would they be ready for us to have a look at? When will you have your homework completed? Your kids are watching, incidentally.

1650

Mrs. Walker: As soon as they are ready and prepared, you, as opposition critic, will certainly be receiving them.

Mr. Jackson: The line we use around here is, "in the fullness of time," or this fall, perhaps.

Mr. Mahoney: Or when they can translate it.

Mrs. Walker: Yes. It probably will not have the terminology and title of integration. It will probably be more of a philosophical statement on education. We have been doing some work on

that, and it should be ready, I hope, by next June. It is not something that is going to be easy.

Mr. Jackson: What about the underachieving? That is the one that I am most concerned about. I was considered a bright child, because my mother always called me "sun."

Mr. D. S. Cooke: That's pretty bad.

Mr. Mahoney: In the fullness of time, things change.

Mr. Jackson: In the fullness of time, you will get that joke.

I am concerned about the underachievement. I have been associated with your work for about 14 years in terms of the challenges that you have created for school boards. In fairness, I think parents in your association have been unduly criticized as being pushy, when in fact you have been advocates for changes to an education system. If we can separate the distinction between a mother or a father who is pushing for his or her son or daughter versus pushing a school system to accommodate the program needs, they are two separate, distinct issues. That is going to lead me into this problem of underachievement and how students are dealt with once they have been identified, because we have a variance in that; and also how a student moves from one learning level, if we can call it that, to another.

We have heard many people come before us who have said it is almost impossible. Even though OSIS says, "Yes, we have a mechanism to accommodate shifting through various levels," in reality it is becoming increasingly difficult. You have indicated an interest in a fourth level, which I am not really having that much difficulty with, but my concern is how we get students to move into it from the basic or the advanced programs that are currently there. Have you put your mind around that issue, or has your association addressed those issues? It is all well and good to ask for a fourth level, but we still have the problems, and a simple identification and placement review committee on an annual basis is not necessarily the route. Every parent does not have the support group or the faculties to approach it from an IPRC approach.

Mrs. Walker: There are a number of issues. I think the enriched level would not necessarily be only for those children who are identified as gifted.

Mr. Jackson: That is my point.

Mrs. Walker: I think it would be extremely important to note that, and right now it is not always available for those in enriched-level courses. Certainly some of the students at the

secondary level who are extremely good in mathematics, say, or English or history, are not necessarily good in all of those subjects, so it would be very appropriate for them to have some enriched-level courses where it is appropriate and needed for them. OSIS talks about how you can even do that within the same class and there can be differentiation within that. All of those things are happening. It is different from what has been done necessarily in the secondary school, but I think it can be done.

Mr. Jackson: Have you had any discussions with the ministry about the proposals?

Mrs. Walker: No, not yet, but we are meeting in a couple of weeks, and we will be having some more discussions there. We have certainly talked this over at various times since OSIS was put forward with ministry officials, including Mr. Liebovitz.

If you do not mind, can I get back to the underachievement? That is really a grave concern that we have, because in some boards the identification process for gifted children includes achievement. For those children who may be very bright—and they may have a excellent Wechsler intelligence scale for children score, if there is such a thing as an excellent WISC score—because they are not producing within the classroom, they are not necessarily identified. That is a real concern because they are left in the regular stream with a teacher who does not necessarily understand some of the components and why they are not achieving.

There are some excellent models that some of the boards are using in looking at these children who are underachieving and how to deal with them in terms of their promotion. It is very much when they have to come around to accomplishing and completing the material before they are promoted. Those are all important items in looking at underachieving. It is a big issue and something we will be wanting and asking for more research on.

I am just looking to my colleagues to see if they want to say anything.

Mrs. L. Carter: Yes, I would just like to make a general comment. Part of the problem we have in approaching the whole issue of education for gifted children is that it is really so new to all of us, even as parents, the whole idea of the provision of education for gifted children, and that is why some of our parents tend to get a little pushy. When you discover that you have a gifted child, particularly if it is your first child, there is a sudden descent of this enormous feeling of responsibility to provide somehow for the child,

and you tend to think of it in terms of provision of educational things. It takes a little while to get the child's giftedness into perspective. The child is gifted, yes, and you do have to deal with that educational reality, but that is only a part of what your child is. They still have to skate and play and watch TV and all of those kinds of child things.

I think for the schools too it is a very new concept: what exactly a gifted child looks like in a classroom, how we find it, how we are sure we have got it, how we are sure he is not precocious and so on. We tend to be looking at the provision of education for them in very narrow ways. We have to do a lot more research and take a lot more time and all become very much more comfortable. The only thing we really have to be sure we do is believe that the provision is necessary.

Bill 82 does that from a legal point of view, but from a lot of what I read, there is research that indicates that even the brightest child in a normal classroom will cope. I could also bring you research which would prove to you that a gifted child in a normal classroom will not cope, and then you have to look at the two sets of research and decide who is right or wrong.

I do not think any of that is really necessary. We can tell you as an organization and as parents of gifted children that most gifted children, without the provision of some form of special education, whether it be part-time withdrawal, resource withdrawal, enrichment, congregated classes, whatever you may choose, depending on the needs of that child our kids really do need it. If you can remember that, then we will all work together and we can work through the specifics of the provision.

Mr. Jackson: Mr. Mahoney had asked you about one of your recommendations with respect to how early you identify and how you identify. I did not see anything in your brief about the point that has been raised several times about gender, birth date and entry point. I thought I would hear something from you about that, although I do not have to hear something from you about that.

Mrs. Walker: No, I really have not talked too much about it. It is an interesting concept. For those of us who have babies who were born in the early part of the year or the late part of the year, you wish they were in, you wish they were not in. I think it is very much an individual matter, and in terms of the association we did not put out a stand on it.

Mr. Jackson: But surely within your own association, there is the contentious issue of "My

child cannot get into the system until one year later than I believe he is ready."

Mrs. Walker: Oh, very definitely.

Mr. Jackson: Well, that was my point.

Mrs. Walker: I guess what we say to parents is: "What are the things that you can do? You can go and speak to the principal and see if there is something, but there probably is not. But what are you doing as well?" There are a lot of things we can do for our children. It does not all have to be done within the school setting.

I think there can be some confusion for children going in. This is very personal and off the top of my head, but I have talked to principals where there is a great deal of mobility within their schools, and they talk about the fact that with the mobility, every time some new child comes into a class there is, again, that restructuring as to the children and where they place, how they fit together and who is friends with whom.

I think it could be disruptive, perhaps, in that sense. For other children, they would just be able to fit in quite peacefully and happily any time of the year that they were allowed to go.

1700

Mr. Reycraft: You are the first group that has appeared before us to ask that we expand streaming at the secondary level from three levels to four. Many groups have asked that we retain the existing three levels, but a lot have suggested that it should be eliminated and suggested instead a reduction in class size across the system so that teachers could better recognize the individual differences and the abilities and disabilities of their students, and that it would be better for all students.

We have had put before us a rather extensive body of research that tends to support that latter view. Have you considered that option in moving to your position about not only retaining the existing three levels of difficulty but, in fact, expanding to four? If so, could you tell me why you rejected that other position?

Mrs. Walker: I think one of the concerns is the teachers that we have. You may get a smaller class size, but if you had such an incredibly diverse number of students within your class for whom you have to program and provide opportunities individually, I think there may be children who will be dropped by the wayside.

In terms of research, as Mrs. Carter on my right said, you can get one body of research and read it and it says one thing; you can get another body of research and find exactly the opposite information. This is where you have to sift

through. With our children, when they are doing research projects, you say you cannot go to just one source, you must go to a great number of sources.

I think there is a real difficulty in that. I just received—and I have not sent for the book yet—something out of the United States. Certainly they were going away from special education and the need for special education for a while. I cannot recall the title now, but I can find it if you are interested in it.

It is just saying that there is a need for retention of special education for exceptional children and for others. We have to be very careful to choose carefully so that no children are disfranchised. I think that is the word we used in our other program. If we allow that to happen, it is a very sad mistake then that we have made. Therefore, we just believe firmly that there have to be options. There is no one situation in which teachers are going to be able to cope with all the children in the classroom.

I guess if you put it to an extreme, in a class of, say, 20, where you have 25 per cent who are exceptional, you could have a visually impaired child, a hearing-impaired child, an extremely gifted child and a severely learning-disabled child. How do you cope with all of those things?

There are some very wonderful things that can happen in terms of peer support and all of those things that happen as well, but I believe we have to look to our teachers. They are the better ones to give the answer to that.

Mr. Reycraft: Has your group considered the research that is available, particularly the more recent research out of the United Kingdom as a result of some of their initiatives on destreaming in adopting your position?

Mrs. Walker: No, we have not done that. We will have to get hold of that.

Madam Chairman: I was frantically looking through all yesterday's exhibits because I remembered in the back of my mind that there was a statement in there about girls and exceptionality, or was that from your exhibit?

Mrs. Walker: No, it was not.

Madam Chairman: I cannot find it. I am sure it exists there somewhere, but I wonder if you could answer the questions. Is there a basic difference between boys and girls and how they approach exceptionality and how they adapt to it, or are you finding it is the same level of difficulty for either sex?

Mrs. Walker: That was not quite the question I was expecting to answer.

Mr. Mahoney: Perhaps you could answer that in two parts. The first part is, is there a basic difference between boys and girls? Then the rest.

Mrs. Walker: In their abilities?

Mrs. O'Neill: That is almost as bad as Mr. Jackson's joke.

Mrs. Walker: One of the concerns we had was the impression that, in terms of identification of students, there seemed to be fewer girls being identified than boys. Marg Carter can speak to that in a minute. I think it is extremely important that we do make sure we are identifying girls—not that I am biased, because I have one of each.

Very often they are not accepted, and I think some of the peer pressure that occurs for the gifted children, whether they are male or female, beginning in the intermediate and going on to the secondary level, is quite intense. It is very difficult to be the browner maybe and all of those things, and still to enjoy and to like school. For some it is a difficulty.

Marg Carter may be able to talk in terms of the responses to the questionnaire and the identification. In terms of how they approach their giftedness, I think they are all ready to get in there and try, but they all have definite needs.

Madam Chairman: So you see the difficulty in the identification as opposed to the adjustment.

Mrs. M. Carter: Yes, our research indicated that in some boards the male-female ratio of identification of gifted was sometimes as high as four to one, but overall we came out pretty close to the figures there.

Madam Chairman: Did they give any rationale for this?

Mrs. Walker: I think some of it is that maybe our young men, more so than our young ladies, begin to act out in class. There may be some behavioural problems being noticed. I do not know all of the answers to that, but those are some of the things that have been suggested. Therefore, they are taken to the IPRC process.

Mrs. M. Carter: I think that is another area where some research is definitely needed.

Madam Chairman: From a subjective point of view, I support that line of theory, just from my own son's experience. My husband claims that our son was in the gifted program one day a week because it gave his ordinary teachers a breather, when Scott would be gone for that day. There is absolutely no truth to that myth; in fact, I am sure there is not. But I did identify that difference with my son and my daughter. there was quite a difference in their attitudes and also

in the acting out on my son's part. It may be why he was very quickly identified.

Mrs. Walker: That sometimes occurs, although there are some girls who do act out as well and are identified very early.

Madam Chairman: What you are saying is the squeaky wheel gets the grease, to a certain extent.

Mrs. Walker: To a certain extent, but I think we do have some boards out there that have excellent identification procedures, that are identifying the kids. They are not looking at the socioeconomic situation; they are not looking at the sexual orientation and some of those things. I think we need to look at how those boards are identifying and share that with other boards.

Madam Chairman: It is certainly a very difficult task.

Mrs. Walker: Yes, because the boards do have the responsibility to determine the criteria and therefore how they will provide for the children.

Madam Chairman: It seems to be working well in the Toronto board. I cannot speak in generalities, but certainly in the experience I have had and in that of other parents I have talked to, it has made the identification quite early and accurately.

Mrs. Walker: That is good.

Madam Chairman: It is good to hear, yes. Thank you very much for your presentation today. Now you can get back to your real work instead of preparing presentations for our committee.

Mrs. Walker: It has been fun.

Madam Chairman: It has been enjoyable having you.

Our next presentation will be by the Allenby Parents' Association. I would like to welcome the representatives from the Allenby Parents' Association to our committee, particularly because Allenby just happens to be in my own home riding. I am very proud that of the few parent associations we have had so far, two of the prominent ones have been from north Toronto, showing what active parents we have in that area.

Welcome to the committee. We have allotted half an hour for the time. Please begin by introducing yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard. We suggest that if you leave approximately half your time for questions that members may have at the end, that would be very helpful. Please start whenever you are ready.

1710

ALLENBY PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Mr. Schnurr: My name is Brian Schnurr. I am chairman of the education committee for the Allenby Parents' Association. Wendy Burton, sitting beside me, is the vice-president of the Allenby Parents' Association.

First off, we would like to thank the select committee for the opportunity both to present our views in writing and orally to you and to indicate that, certainly, we welcome the establishment of a process that allows this kind of public input into the question of education and the future of education in this province.

As parents of elementary school children, the Radwanski report has caused all of us, I know, to learn more about the educational process and to give thought to those areas in the educational process that may need change or at least need some degree of reconsideration and rethinking.

I hope, and I know Wendy hopes, that you will agree that the brief we have submitted is positive in its nature and its orientation. We have tried very hard to offer what we consider to be constructive suggestions rather than dwell on criticisms.

Although many of our suggestions, and indeed many of the recommendations that came out of the Radwanski report, have a dollar cost attached to them, we have attempted to be realistic in our brief and practical in our recommendations. We are not submitting something that we feel is a blueprint for a Utopian educational system.

With that general introduction on my part, we would like to spend the balance of the time allotted to us in highlighting for you some areas of our our submissions that we think are particularly significant and that, from the perspective of the Allenby Parents' Association, are particularly important. To do that highlighting, I will turn things over to Wendy Burton.

Mrs. Burton: We introduced our brief with a quote from Alexander Pope: "'Tis education forms the common mind: Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

We were not being pretentious when we put that there. We included it because it so artfully states our philosophy. A sapling that is properly nurtured will grow into a strong tree, able to fight pests and disease, able to reach for and grow towards the sun, able to take its place in the forest. A tree whose early growth is stunted may survive, but it is less likely and more difficult for it to reach its potential. So it is with children. That is why the starting point for our brief is the

starting point of formal education: the primary years.

Our first key recommendation is recommendation 2, that schools be destreamed only after primary education has been boosted and children prepare for a different kind of high schooling. The key to success is always good preparation. Our second key point is in recommendation 4, that unstreamed classes have a lower pupil-teacher ratio. Why? Because of the greater range of abilities in one setting.

In the Toronto Board of Education, of which we are a part, parents can sit on their school staffing committees and have input into the staffing formula. Although our school as a whole is large, when it comes to staffing we are like two small schools, one English and one French, because Allenby is a French immersion community school. So even we have to group students from two grades into one class from time to time.

We always make sure these classes are smaller because of the greater challenge of teaching students from a larger range of ability. More differences among students requires more teacher time to work with them. So lower pupil-teacher ratios in unstreamed classes should be a principle of unstreamed education.

The more we look into streaming, the more it seems as though it were adopted at least in part as an efficiency measure. While that may have seemed necessary at one time, it is folly to look at education in those terms for any long period of time. Good education is expensive, but it is worth it. After all, we are buying something we are going to use for a lifetime. We should buy the best.

I speak in consumer terms on purpose because it brings me to one of the special problems of public schools: namely, that they have a mandate to offer services suitable to a wide range of people with no guarantee they will buy. In fact, those people can go elsewhere.

To remain vital, public schools need to offer some choice in their systems too. That is why we suggest that some classes be streamed, such as math and science. However, we feel some classes can remain unstreamed through grade 12, such as civics.

We also feel there should be room in each school year for perhaps one elective. We realize that the common curriculum we endorse for those years would be a challenge to the abilities and interests of some students. Having an elective in the program will give them something to feel excited about and successful at. It will help keep them going. This is one of the many reasons we

feel it might be time to look at a longer school day.

The importance of finding something a young person feels successful at is one reason that we do not recommend any new rules regarding part-time work by students. For many kids, a job brings a lot of satisfaction not found in schoolwork. Indeed, we would like to see schools find more ways of relating students' jobs to their schoolwork. Perhaps working students could get credit for a course in which they would be required to keep a journal, analyse how their companies are organized and think about how they would be affected if there were a change in supply or demand. Maybe we are doing this already. If we are not, we are missing a good opportunity for learning.

When we suggested a longer schoolday in recommendation 12, we had mostly older students in mind, especially at the start. Many younger students need after-school care, but a longer academic day could be a bit much for them to handle. They need programs of their own, but that is a different issue.

We are thinking about children from at least grade 7, and probably grade 5, the age at which children can be left home alone unattended. Nowadays many of these children are latchkey kids and might be better off in school for social as well as educational reasons. The extra period in the day could be used for the mentoring and tutoring that Radwanski talks about. It could be time for extracurricular activities and it could be time for elective courses, perhaps led, in some cases, by nontraditional teachers hired on a contract basis, like university lecturers or extension teachers.

Now let me speak about what students should be learning. We approached this by asking what should be the aim of schooling. Should it aim to prepare students for the job market or to prepare students for a lifetime of personal growth? We feel that schools need to help with both, but there should probably be more emphasis on making kids ready for the job market, since that is what students themselves seem to expect. People will probably feel more satisfied, and perhaps be more productive in their jobs, if they are exposed to art, music and world literature. But people are pretty good at figuring out how to manage their leisure time, so perhaps the schools should concentrate on the tougher business of learning skills that will help them with their life's work.

That does not mean granting the wish lists of local businesses. People today need learning they can take anywhere. Ours is, and will continue to

be, a mobile society. More and more workers will be moving, not just to new locations but also to new jobs in new industries. The successful workers in the future will be able to deal with problems quickly and accurately, and they will be better able to do that if they speak a common language of math, science, geography and history, not just English or French. That is why we endorsed a more common curriculum. The same material gets taught to all students, though probably not in quite the same way.

We need to be more creative about teaching. We talk a lot about child-centred learning, yet there is evidence that not all teachers are equally good at handling children of differing abilities, especially differing abilities to handle abstractions. So it would seem that there needs to be more emphasis in teacher training programs on teaching children who are not abstract thinkers. But we can never expect all teachers to be all things to all students. That is one reason we think the spiral curriculum is a sensible approach to elementary education, especially to grade 4. If a child has not picked up a concept in one year, it might be because he is not ready for it, but it might also be because that teacher's approach to that concept did not work with that child. But if the child encounters the same problem two years in a row, then he or she probably needs remediation.

We were trying to be creative ourselves when we were talking about the testing and accountability issues. We suggested that the province set up an independent agency to audit the schools. It is in the nature of audits that some testing be done by someone other than the subject of the audit, so we see testing as intrinsic to the accountability process.

1720

Some tests have been criticized for not being sensitive to different cultural milieux. We suggest getting people from all those concerned communities to help us do the testing and auditing. Eventually, this auditing agency could be a creative force in the school system since it would be constantly evaluating the schools instead of leaving the job to commissions and select committees once a generation.

We have heard that the danger of testing is that teachers will teach to the test. That is not the kind of test we are interested in. We are interested in tests that you cannot study for in a few weeks, tests of accumulated skills, something like the scholastic aptitude tests in the United States. Those tests are used as entrance examinations, a prospective we would like to see adopted here.

Tests are too often seen as an end, whereas they should be seen as a beginning, like an audition for a part in a play. Tests, like auditions, are to see if an individual is capable of filling a new role, be it in university, industry or grade 4.

In industry, of course, tests are done to ensure quality control. These tests are done routinely to make sure products and services are up to standard. When they are not, adjustments are made. The lessons for the school system are obvious to us.

Moreover, the more routine we make tests, the less scary and final each single test will be, but we feel flexibility is important here too. Not every kid should be tested at the same time or in the same way. Some kids will need to be in smaller settings, single-sex settings or have a choice of days of the week, but these are all solvable problems.

That is all I wish to highlight at this time. I would be pleased to take your questions or hear your comments.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Wendy, and congratulations on an excellent presentation. Some of the things you have highlighted have already been brought to the attention of the committee and some of them are a little new to us. I think we will open it up to questions at this time.

Mr. Mahoney: I want to know who belongs to the two little girls at the back of the room because they are absolutely marvellous; they sit there being so good.

Mr. Schnurr: I do not.

Mr. Mahoney: My wife and I would like the person to come to our house for a while and talk to our children, if you would not mind.

On the testing issue, I guess the concern of a lot of people, both professionals in the industry and in the business of educating and nonprofessionals who are poking their noses into it, is that the tests connote rote learning, connote a requirement to be able to sit down and answer questions that have been designed by somebody else which may only test your memory and may not test your ability to think logically or to express yourself clearly, those kinds of things.

There has been discussion about establishing—I do not even like the word, but the word being used is “benchmarks”—levels. I think one group—actually, a couple of groups—have said we should put less emphasis on grades and results and put more emphasis on divisions and the progress of the human being. The ability at grade 6 to be able to put a sentence together and have people understand what it is you are trying to say might

be one thing that would allow you in one area to move on to that next division.

I wonder how you answer the critics against the testing from a point of view of education simply being a memory exercise and learning by rote.

Mrs. Burton: There are a lot of different tests out there. I have taken a lot in my lifetime and I have a daughter who is already being tested for the benchmark program in Toronto and she was tested for the gifted program.

There are different kinds of tests. There are tests of memory and there are tests of problem-solving ability. I think this is a solvable problem. We said in our brief let's take a can-do attitude to this. We think tests are useful for setting standards and keeping the system to those standards. Nobody wants a memory test. I agree with you there. If you are familiar with the scholastic aptitude tests, for instance, in the United States, you cannot study for those tests. They test accumulated knowledge. They test language ability, problem solving and that sort of thing.

Mr. Mahoney: The emphasis would, in essence, be on an ability to express yourself or something of that nature. I found one of the most effective tests—and I remember having a teacher who felt this way—was an open-book exam. Everyone at first was stunned by having an open-book exam; this is crazy. His attitude was: "I would rather you know where to find the information and know how to pull it apart, put it down on paper and give me the answer. I feel you will probably learn more by doing that than sitting at home at night trying to memorize what some guy said 200 years ago or whatever or trying to memorize some great equation." In adult education, of course, open-book and open-facility testing seems to be more and more acceptable.

How do you feel about standardized testing? Are you talking about standardized testing when you talk about these aptitude tests from the United States, putting that right in across the province? Do you feel that a different community might have different requirements? Should there be flexibility and design to these tests?

Mrs. Burton: This is why we suggest that there be an independent auditing and testing agency. To a certain extent, I think people will pick and choose the test they want. In our discussions with parents, they want to know how their schools are stacking up with others across the province.

I lived in Sudbury and a lot of the parents who lived in Sudbury and were raising children did not think their children were going to grow up and work in Sudbury. They thought—they hoped—they were going to live somewhere else, more southerly.

Mr. Mahoney: Wonderful place.

Mrs. Burton: They wanted to know how their high schools stacked up against high schools in Ottawa and Toronto.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: We do that kind of testing now. That is the kind of testing Mrs. O'Neill is involved in.

Mr. Jackson: We just do not make it public.

Mrs. Burton: As I understand, it is a pilot project, the benchmark testing being done by the ministry now.

Mrs. O'Neill: It is certainly not to test school against school. That is not its goal. It is to test what is being taught in that particular school to what the objectives are for that subject area. I do not think we would be testing east against west.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Oh, no, I do not mean that. From the way you explained it yesterday or the day before, the school boards would then get an idea of how they are performing, not necessarily comparing themselves with another school, but what they are achieving.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is correct. That is the goal. If they decide to share that more informally east or west, that would be their prerogative, but that is not our goal.

Mr. Mahoney: I think those are all my questions. I would just add that I enjoyed your brief too, particularly the ideas on streaming and the attachments if you are going to destream and doing it both ways. I think you have put out some really good ideas that we can think about.

Mrs. O'Neill: I want to ask you about your parents' organization, if I may. I am most impressed when I see 90 per cent paid-up membership. How do you go about getting parents that involved in your school? You are one of the few individual parent groups, I think, that is going to appear before us. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

Mr. Schnurr: A lot of threats.

Mrs. Burton: Very cheap membership fees, and I think there is a tradition in our part of North Toronto. For a long time, it has been an area where people with young families settle and they are very often people who enjoyed a good education themselves. If they do not see something happening in the schools, they feel free to

go in and make sure it is happening, help out or whatever. That is one of the nice things about the Allenby Parents' Association. When we wanted a computer program, the parents set it up, manned it and that sort of thing. Some of the credit has to go to people who came before us and the principals. There has been a very open attitude in the school, and I think parents feel very comfortable there.

Mrs. O'Neill: You obviously have regular meetings and the staff are involved in all of those good things?

Mrs. Burton: Yes. We have good monthly meetings there. Nobody can remember when it started the way it started. It is a well-oiled machine right now.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you very much. It is very encouraging.

Mr. Schnurr: I would just add that I think a lot of the credit does go to the principal, the administration and the teachers at our school. We have been very fortunate that the attitude, as far as I know, going back many, many years, at the school has been one of acceptance—more than acceptance, one of encouragement of the involvement of parents. If you involve the parents, then a parents' association grows out of it and there is very much an involvement of the parents' association with the teachers and with the administration of the school.

Mrs. O'Neill: I presume the parents are involved in a volunteer capacity as well within the school.

Mr. Schnurr: Yes, very much so.

Madam Chairman: Allenby has probably one of the most active parents' associations in Toronto. I think a lot of it might stem from the fact it is truly a community school. They are one of the few schools with French immersion that does not bus in children and their reputation is such that people actually move into the Allenby district in order for the children to go to the school. I think you see the reflection of this in how active the parents are and how much of their own time and effort they put into the projects. I think this is an excellent example. It is particularly important to our committee because, as Mrs. O'Neill mentioned, there are so few parent groups which have had the time, the energy, commitment and courage to come before this

very frightening committee. As you can tell, we are all tigers.

Mr. Mahoney: Only the chairman.

Mrs. O'Neill: You obviously must have some exceptional students within the school. Are the special education parents quite involved in your organization as well?

Mrs. Burton: Which end? I mean gifted and/or—

Mrs. O'Neill: I am talking about all exceptionalities.

Mrs. Burton: The plant is 60 years old in our school and it cannot accommodate physically disabled children, so they go elsewhere for programs. I do not know very much myself about the learning disabled children, but I imagine they participate in whatever programs, usually withdrawal programs, I think, that the Toronto board runs. I have a child in the gifted program and we are not active as a separate group. Our association itself has an enrichment committee that works on projects that will enrich the entire school rather than any one group of children.

Madam Chairman: I would very much like again to thank the Allenby Parents' Association for its contribution to our committee. You are to be commended and we wish more parent groups would get involved as you have. Thank you.

Mr. Schnurr: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: The select committee—

Mr. Mahoney: School is out?

Madam Chairman: School is just about out, Mr. Mahoney. I have just one brief announcement before we go. When we heard the presentation by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in July, they mentioned they were going to be having a conference in mid-October and they hoped a number of the members of the select committee would attend. I do have information on that conference. If any members are interested, it begins on October 14, if I am not mistaken. I would be happy to provide you with that information.

Boys and girls, school is out. The select committee stands adjourned until Monday, September 19 in Ottawa at the Delta Hotel at 10 a.m.

The committee adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

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Carter, Lee, Provincial Executive, Publicity Chairman

From the Allenby Parents' Association:

Burton, Wendy, Vice-President

Schnurr, Brian, Chairman, Education Committee



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Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Organization of the Education Process

First Session, 34th Parliament

Monday, September 19, 1988



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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Contents of the proceedings reported in this issue of Hansard appears at the back, together with a list of the members of the committee and other members and witnesses taking part.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday, September 19, 1988

The committee met at 10:31 a.m., in the Delta B meeting room, Delta Ottawa Hotel, Ottawa.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: I would like to open the meeting of the select committee on education as we come to Ottawa. We are very glad to be here to hear the viewpoints of the people in Ottawa on our education system. We will be looking at matters such as OSIS, streaming, semestering and grade promotion.

Our first presentation today will be by the Association for Bright Children. Come forward, please, and take your place before the microphone. We have allocated half an hour for your presentation time as well as any questions the members might have. When I was reading through your brief on the weekend, I noticed it is quite extensive. The members received copies and read them in advance, so if there are parts which you feel you could précis so as to leave time at the end for members' questions, it would be appreciated.

Please begin whenever you are ready, and start by introducing yourselves for the purpose of Hansard.

ASSOCIATION FOR BRIGHT CHILDREN, OTTAWA REGION CHAPTER

Mr. Hill: My name is Christopher Hill. I am president of our local chapter here in Ottawa. I am also, in fact, vice-president of the provincial association.

To my left, I would like to introduce Barbara Anglin, who is past president of the provincial association and is our education liaison person for our local chapter. She is also chairperson of a local education committee which is the regional co-ordinating committee for enrichment. This is a committee largely of educators.

ABC has been invited to have two representatives on that regional co-ordinating committee. This committee is involved with things like the putting on of the mini-courses at the universities for gifted students. It is a measure of Barbara Anglin's involvement in education that this group of educators invited her to be chairperson of their committee.

On my right is Deanna Silverman, who is our representative on the special education advisory committee of the Carleton Board of Education. She is chairperson of our committee of representatives on the special education advisory committee.

The Ottawa chapter of ABC is the largest provincial chapter. We are a very active chapter. We put on major children's programs, have a number of meetings for adults and put out a newsletter. One thing I would like to clarify is that as an association we are an association for bright children. Our areas of interest are bright children as well as the identified gifted. The programs that we put on are aimed at a broad spectrum of bright children.

We have a broader interest in many aspects of excellence in education that we have put in briefs over the years on issues such as science education. We recently produced a brief on primary education which was a provincial position paper, but was written by this chapter here. I and my two colleagues here were the main authors of that document.

I would like to turn now to our brief. I have to take my glasses off so that I can see what I have written in front of me. There are two main themes that we would like to stress today. One is that we consider very important the recognition that the needs of the individual child should be met.

One of the aspects of our education system that we find very encouraging is that a great deal has been done in recent years to meet the needs of the individual child, to recognize the diversity in children and to try to serve that diversity.

In fact, one of our major concerns is that some of the flexibility and diversity in our system needs to be maintained. We are very concerned when we see any suggestions that might curtail the diversity of services that have been provided; not just diversity in the recognition of different levels of students but also the diversity in terms of academic disciplines that are being pursued. It is clear that our society needs very diverse skills in its highly educated population, and we are concerned that the education system should maintain that.

The second main theme is that we find many of the documents that have come from the Ministry of Education over the years are excellent in their

recommendations and their guidelines. Our concern is that in some areas these recommendations and guidelines are not being fully implemented, and there is uneven implementation at the local level. We recognize the importance of local autonomy. Where there is local autonomy, it allows for local initiative; it allows for flexibility. At its best, local autonomy works very well. However, local autonomy should not take place at the expense of providing a full range of services to meet the needs of a wide diversity of children.

In order to achieve this, there needs to be, starting at the ministry level, implementation of greater monitoring and evaluation of what is actually taking place. One of our major concerns is this gap that exists between the excellent recommendations and some of the local implementation. We feel the ministry should take more action in ensuring that standards are achieved throughout the province.

I would like to turn now to the specific topics; first of all, OSIS. We consider OSIS to be a very good document. We have one or two minor concerns about it, but in general we are very supportive of OSIS as a document. Some of the features we like in particular, because of the options they allow to the students who are of interest to our group, are the following.

First, we agree with the concept of there being compulsory credits, 16 as a general rule, but also the option that this 16 can be reduced to 12 for exceptional students.

Second, we also agree to the three different levels of difficulty, advanced, general and basic, and we are very strongly supportive of the concept that within the advanced there is the option of enriched courses. With enriched courses, the marks are actually allocated at the advanced level. There are, in fact, two of the local boards here that also offer congregated classes for the gifted at the advanced level.

A third feature we like is that, related to special education, there may be modifications in kind, breadth, depth and pace, a feature of this being the fact that more or less time may be taken to gain a credit.

The fourth feature we like is the option of credits to be taken in the elementary school at the intermediate level.

The fifth is the option of independent study. This, we believe, is particularly valuable in rural areas where there may be limited resources.

Sixth, we like very much the recommendations related to guidance.

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We do, however, have two concerns. One concern relates to the formal requirements to get an Ontario secondary school diploma. Previously there were two diplomas, the grade 12 and the grade 13. Current requirements are that the students should have the basic compulsory requirements and also 30 credits. There are situations where students are passing through the high school at an accelerated rate and to go through fast they may be delayed by the need to get a full 30 credits.

We believe there needs to be flexibility in this particular requirement, flexibility that allows one of two options. Where students have clearly mastered a skill, they should be allowed to waive the requirement to get a credit or, alternatively, they should be given the credit when it is clearly recognized that they have achieved work at that level.

We were citing the example of a student in one of the high schools in this region at the moment who clearly already is at grade 11 level in mathematics, if not beyond that, and to get the necessary number of credits he has to take the grade 9 and grade 10 credits in mathematics. This is unnecessary. He should be either given exemption or be able to get the recognition that he already has mastered that level.

We think there should be some flexibility in there.

The other major concern we have comes back to the implementation issues, concern about discrepancies and shortfalls in what is actually taking place. Enriched courses as an option are in fact frequently not available. The reduction below 110 hours is an option which to the best of our knowledge is rarely used. The possibility that students at the intermediate level can gain credits seems to be applied very unevenly. We can cite boards where in one school in the board this option seems to be available and in another school the option is not available. There seems to be very uneven use of that particular option and it seems to be very much at the discretion of a particular principal without any reference to the needs of the students.

We find the number of guidance staff in schools tends to be limited in many instances. We feel there is a need for more information to parents and students about the possibilities and the possible options which are available in OSIS. More generally, we find there is a lack of monitoring of what is happening.

As a general comment, our conclusion from the uneven implementation is that sometimes

what we have in Ontario is not quality education with varied approaches but education of varied quality.

Our recommendations would be, first, that there should be greater monitoring. In particular, we would like to see reporting of the extent to which the various options under OSIS are being used, the options such as the substitution of credits, credits for intermediate students, the modification of hours.

We also feel it is important that there should be more in-service training and that funding should be available for this in-service training.

The next issue I would like to address is semestering. We have reservations about semestering. We are not convinced that there is any clear evidence of its value for students. One of our particular concerns is that we feel the intermittent nature of study is not desirable. If students have studied for one semester in a particular discipline with some intensity and then will not be studying that discipline for the next half of the year and then will have a long summer vacation, a great deal is lost and forgotten in this time period.

It was interesting; we noted that one school, in recommending semestering, had suggested that the virtue of semestering was that, because there was a shorter time span before the students had to take their exam, they had less chance of forgetting and therefore it increased their chance of getting a credit.

We felt that missed the point, that our education system is not simply to get credits but to leave people with knowledge that they maintain. We consider that a continuous program is a better way of ensuring that students learn, and maintain what they have learned.

Our other concern is that students in a semestering school may end up completing their course after four and a half years, for instance, and then there may be a hiatus between their being in high school and going to university. That hiatus can certainly be overcome if there are better ways of bridging to university, where they may start in university halfway through the year. But in general, that is not a desirable option and not an easily available option.

I would now like to address the issue of streaming. We support the concept of streaming and most particularly we believe that at all stages of a student's education, he should be challenged at a level appropriate to his ability. The school system needs to organize itself in such a way that it can ensure that this is happening. This requires recognition that there needs to be grading and

streaming at various stages in the education system.

We believe that all people learn best when they are challenged at an appropriate level. We believe that people study better when they are studying with their intellectual peers. This reduces student stress in the type of supportive environment where you feel that you are working at your own level with other people working at a similar level. There is stress in finding that you are at either end, that you are working and finding work much too easy and others around you are not studying at your level. Equally, there is stress in finding that other people are working at a much more advanced level than you and you are not able to maintain this.

A third benefit of streaming—and this is not an issue to be minimized by any means—is that in fact streaming will allow considerable reduction in stress for teachers, and increased teacher effectiveness. Teachers trying to teach a broad spectrum of students all together are put under a great deal of stress in what is a very difficult and challenging occupation.

OSIS recognized streaming in allowing the three levels. What we feel is important is that there is flexibility and guidance concerning which level students go into and flexibility that they can choose credits at different levels. If they wish to change from one level to another, there should be easy options for them to transfer from one level to another. The important thing is that it allows each child to find his own level, but also, when he wants to readjust a level, this can be done fairly easily.

The excellent early primary education project argued for continuity and flexibility in the education system from the earliest grades. It also was quite critical at points about the lack of this in many schools. If the full recommendations in that project are to be implemented, we will find students going through the primary grades at different speeds. Although they may be remaining with their chronological peers, they may be studying in groups and will complete the actual work necessary at different stages. What may then happen is that they will move into the junior and on to the intermediate grades and it is necessary to implement the same flexibility at that level.

At the moment there is no documentation that we are aware of that has addressed this issue. It seems there is some gap here between some recommendations of what should be happening at the primary level and then recommendations in OSIS as to what is happening at the high school

level. Our recommendation is that there should be streaming at all levels and the ability of students at an appropriate level, at an appropriate pace, throughout the system, from primary through to the high school level.

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I would now like to address the issue of grade promotion. We have experienced a problem. There seems to be some dichotomy between the concept of grade promotion and the idea, which is increasingly being recommended, that there should be continuous progress, that in fact as students master skills they should be able to move on to the next level of skill and not spend their time repeating work they have already learned. This may happen in one discipline. They may be very advanced in mathematics but only somewhere around the average in their language skills. With this sort of model, they should be able to progress and move to a more advanced level in their mathematics, although they may be staying at the standard level in English.

At the moment, there seems to be a lot of difficulty in how this is implemented. The usual result is that they remain with their peers and end up not having continuous progress, end up in a situation where they repeat work. We think it is very important that what is put in place is systems that will allow this to happen.

We believe very strongly in the concept that there should be acceleration in individual subjects or more generally, where this is appropriate to a student. But if this happens, this needs to take into account the social and emotional development of the child. What sometimes happens is that there is just grade skipping: the decision that this child is advanced, so he will just skip a grade, with emotional problems sometimes resulting from this. We also believe that there should be clear options where a student can stay with his chronological peers and yet effectively, in the study he is doing, be accelerated.

We also think it very important that there should be effective bridges between the different levels in the education system. This is recognized in OSIS, with the possibility that students at the intermediate level can study for credits. We think more should be done to implement similar bridges between the high school level and the university, with the option for students at the high school level to be able to study university credits.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Hill, I would just mention that there is less than 10 minutes left. I know you have completed the substance of your

brief, so it is up to you whether you wish to use the remaining time.

Mr. Hill: All I was going to do now was give a conclusion to really wrap up, but I will leave it there, then.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. As I say, we appreciate the fact that you had such a substantial brief that you have had to limit your remarks.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There are so many questions that we probably could think to ask, we are going to have to focus a bit. I guess I would like to ask you a question that comes around your comments on and your support for streaming. It seems to me that, in some ways—maybe it is a matter of definition that is the problem, but it runs counter to some of the philosophical points you are making in your argument—streaming is compartmentalization, something that you speak against in your document. In fact, it seems to have been implemented over the past decades as much as a compartmentalization by group as it has been anything to do with individualized programming or individualized capacity for students.

Looking at your recommendations, and looking at the difference in the way the elementary panel, especially the junior portion of it, as you indicate, deals with kids of different learning capacities within a heterogeneous class, rather than the very strict structures that have been within the high school system for years, in which we basically talk about streaming—that is, kids who get put into vocational classes and can never get out of them, kids who are said to be general and stay general all the way through their high school levels, or kids who are advanced and go on to university and never get to be able to take technology-course credits, because it seemed to be beneath their dignity as academic students—I guess I have difficulty understanding why you do not see the benefit of the heterogeneous approach augmenting the individualized program educational needs for each student within a heterogeneous class.

I worry. For instance, you talk about the stress on kids from being in a class situation where there are people with different abilities. It strikes me that there is an enormous stress, and stratification that takes place, on kids in high school where you are told you are a vocational kid, you are down in that level and there is no way to move and you have the academic stream there as well. I worry that you do not see a huge value to bright kids for peer group teaching, for instance, within the heterogeneous class and

recognize that some of the Catholic systems have actually been doing this in the secondary panel with some success.

I am sorry to make it so long. You speak about the need for transitional courses and the ability to move among levels, which is moving out of that compartmentalization and recognizing the individualized needs of kids. I wonder why you did not deal more with the conflict that I see there between what has happened in streaming in terms of who gets streamed, how, and the individualized needs of kids no matter what social class they come from.

Mr. Hill: My colleague Deanna Silverman will answer that.

Mrs. Silverman: That is an extremely wide-ranging subject, as you know. Part of it, I think, is that we are into differences of semantics here. At the moment, within the streaming system—let's take the secondary level—a student can take courses at the advanced level for some subjects, for other subjects at the general level and, if necessary, for a particular subject—let's say to get through core French—at the basic level if his abilities in the various subjects vary this greatly. For some of them, they honestly do.

There are also the students who start off high school and have very little use for education and the system and then, one hopes, at some stage they click. Either they are late maturers or they have suddenly found an overwhelming interest that is really going to motivate them. Whereas their original interests and choices were at one level, they actually do have the ability, if they put their minds to it, so that they may want to move along.

What we are basically postulating is that the so-called streams that exist now are not hard-and-fast rules. There is this individual variability already within the stream. Since these streams that exist, the basic, the advanced and the general, are self-selected, there is a lot of heterogeneity within them at the moment. It is not just the 90th-percentile student who is in the advanced. Very frequently, a lot of kids who are struggling and who are thrilled to get the 50 stay in the advanced. So there is within these systems right now a lot of heterogeneity.

What we are saying is that the notion of challenging students to their level of ability is a more fundamental notion in education as a stress reducer and as a promoter of success. Nothing works like success. If students are being challenged at a level where they can never hope to succeed, then you have got stress, then you have the problems of depression and you have all our

scares about teenage suicide and the rest of it as part of the syndromes that get manifested. If students are challenged so far below their level of ability, you can get all sorts of problems there too.

What we are saying is that we believe starting off with students being challenged at an appropriate level matched to their ability, to their learning styles and the rest of it is the super way to start. Then, if there is change and difference, have the bridging mechanisms in there, have them in there for the late bloomers, have them in there for the kids who suddenly decide they need hands on in the outside world and then will come back to education. Let's not start by having this great blob of one size fits all, because it does not.

1100

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I wish I were sure that we were dealing only with a semantic difference of opinion. If we are, that is great, but it would take too many questions to discover whether we have major philosophical differences of opinion here or whether it is just the semantic notion of what streaming is about.

Mr. Jackson: In the context of Mr. Johnston's question, where do you stand on vocational schools?

Mrs. Silverman: Once again, the choice of vocational schools to some extent is a matter for the student and the parent, as well as the functioning of the children. If it is deemed by the student and the parent, with, I hope, proper testing, guidance and all the rest of it, that that is a good starting point for the kid to get into, then I would accept that. I think that when students are in there, if they suddenly take off in something, I think there should be bridges, which is what we are saying in our document. We should have flexibility that is allowed, where choices can be made, where a takeoff can be recognized.

Mr. Jackson: Let me ask the question a different way, then. If a specific school board in this jurisdiction were to suggest that it will have only vocational schools for a certain group of students in the community or that there shall no longer be any vocational schools, what would be the position of your association?

Mrs. Silverman: Our position is always that we think the full range of delivery methods and subjects is essential in every school board, a full range of delivery of what is appropriate to the students.

Mr. Jackson: But that was not my question. My question would be that if we were to say we

are dismantling vocational schools, which is basically forcing Mr. Johnston's question—

Mrs. Silverman: Which is what Mr. Radwanski is suggesting, to some extent. Am I reading you correctly on that one? I would say I would join the parents who would picket and say, "Get these things back in."

Mr. Jackson: That is what I thought.

Madam Chairman: We have technically run out of time, but I know Mr. McGuinty is quite eager to ask his question, and I am sure, under the circumstances, he will be very brief.

Mr. McGuinty: I guess we have seen the updating of our whole education system in the past few years. In my experience as a trustee and as a teacher, I marvel at how it has been updated. We now have facilities for the bright and the gifted, the advanced, enriched, general, basic, pre-basic, trainable retarded. Given the horrendous efforts that are being made in education, I think it is inevitable that there is going to be some slippage along the way.

Do you have any documentation to support your contention that the enriched levels are frequently not available, or to what extent guidance staff is limited, to what extent schools fail to get out adequate information regarding options, to what extent there is a lack of monitoring of what is going on and to what extent there is uneven implementation? Do you have any documentation specifically to support that contention?

Mr. Hill: In a way, you have answered your question. The answer is that we do not have information on some of these things, because the information, quite a bit, about what is happening, the monitoring, does not exist. There is no information about how many students are working at this level or that level in many cases. One of our problems is that we do not find the information there. Our information is that we cannot find the information.

Mr. McGuinty: How can we assume, then, that these flaws are there?

Mr. Hill: If there is monitoring, there should be information about the monitoring that is going on, but this information does not seem to exist. What we at ABC did in fact do is to send out a questionnaire to all our chapters, particularly about the area of implementation of special education, and when we handed this to people at the ministry, they welcomed it because it provided some information they did not have. What we are saying is based upon something

discussed between people in our association, in our own boards.

Mrs. Silverman: One of the ways that we check on what is going on is for our special education advisory committee reps from all the boards we sit on to get together and say: "What kind of information are you getting? What kind of questions are you asking?" We have made the point of asking the questions on these specific issues, and in most cases either there is absolutely no information available or we are told, "We know one school that is doing such-and-such and, as far as we know, that is the only school that is doing it." Even at the board level, on some of this kind of thing, the information that we, as SEAC reps, get back and can bring to our organizations is no, that information does not exist, or one principal keeps it and another principal does not, or one principal is doing it and another principal is not.

We get reports from our parents. We get a phone call that says: "My Johnny in grade 8 is allowed to take a grade 9 course at the local high school. They even have a car that comes and gets him and takes him there." Another parent phones and says: "Hey, Johnny at that school can do it. My son is at the same level as Johnny, because they play together and they work together and they read the same math books before they go to sleep at night, but his principal says, 'No, he can't.'" Do not laugh. I had a parent phone to say, "The principal won't believe that my child is reading math books at bedtime."

Mrs. O'Neill: I love your human touch, Mrs. Silverman.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Association for Bright Children for your contribution to our committee today.

Nous accueillons aujourd'hui plusieurs groupes qui vont faire une présentation conjointe en français. Venez vous installer devant le micro, s'il vous plaît.

Notre comité vous souhaite de nouveau la bienvenue. Je vous demanderais d'excuser ma prononciation française. Dans l'intérêt de tout le monde présent aujourd'hui, je vais m'arrêter de vous casser les oreilles et passer à l'anglais.

Welcome to our committee. We have allocated one hour for your presentation and we hope you will be able to leave time for members to ask questions. A number of the members present do not have the good fortune to be perfectly fluent in French, and I understand that you would be willing to entertain their questions in anglais. Thank you. You may begin whenever you are ready. Would you introduce yourself for the

purpose of electronic Hansard and then begin?
Merci.

PRÉSENTATION COMMUNE: ACFO, AEFO,
AFCSO, ASFO, FAPI et FESFO

Mme Soucie: Merci, Madame la Présidente et membres du Comité. Nous faisons ce matin une présentation conjointe de plusieurs associations francophones de l'Ontario. D'ailleurs, cet été, lors de vos audiences du mois de juillet, vous avez déjà reçu à peu près les mêmes représentants et les mêmes associations.

Mon nom est Rolande Soucie, je suis présidente de l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario, organisme-parapluie qui regroupe la majorité des associations d'envergure provinciale de l'Ontario français. Cela me fait plaisir de vous présenter les collègues qui nous accompagnent. Ces personnes vont aussi participer à la présentation de ce matin, et je leur demanderai de répéter le nom de l'organisme qu'ils représentent au moment où ils feront leur partie de la présentation, étant donné que nous sommes quand même une délégation assez importante.

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Alors, à mon extrême droite, M^{me} Huberte Polenz, de la Fédération des associations de parents et d'instituteurs, l'association provinciale; Lise Castonguay, présidente de l'Association des surintendantes et des surintendants franco-ontariens; à ma gauche, Jocelyne Ladouceur, de l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario, et M. Jacques Hallé, président de l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens.

Alors, vous avez un peu la gamme, si vous voulez. Vous avez les parents, les conseillers scolaires, les enseignants et l'association-parapluie, l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario, qui regroupe ces associations.

Toutes ces associations, qui représentent des milliers de personnes hautement sensibilisées aux changements profonds qui touchent notre population, en particulier notre population scolaire francophone, veulent apporter leur contribution à la grande recherche du mieux en matière d'éducation en langue française.

Nous souhaitons que les membres du Comité spécial, s'ils doivent en arriver à suggérer des changements, sauront prendre ceux qui auront une portée bénéfique à court et surtout à long terme sur l'enjeu de taille qui se présente à eux, soit l'éducation des jeunes, les adultes des années 2000.

Le fondement philosophique de l'éducation en Ontario, à savoir «qu'il faut donner à tout apprenant de nos écoles l'occasion de se développer dans la pleine mesure de ses capacités physiques, intellectuelles et morales», convient pleinement aux francophones de l'Ontario. C'est pour cette raison que nous nous sommes battus pour obtenir le droit à l'éducation élémentaire et secondaire en langue française partout sur le territoire de la province, peu importe le nombre. De plus, peu importe la région où il ou elle habite, l'élève de langue française doit avoir accès à une éducation équivalente à celle des élèves de langue anglaise. La Cour supérieure de l'Ontario nous a reconnu ce droit. C'est aussi pour cette raison que nous continuons à nous battre pour éliminer les écoles dites bilingues ou dites mixtes, car elles sont un foyer d'assimilation pour les jeunes francophones. Nous nous battons aussi pour obtenir des conseils scolaires homogènes de langue française et pour obtenir la gestion totale de nos institutions.

Les Franco-Ontariennes et Franco-Ontariens, partenaires de toujours dans l'édification de cette province, en sont rendus à un tournant, à une maturation historique. Leur petite histoire montre bien qu'à force de ténacité, de constance, de confiance en leurs idéaux, ils ont surmonté des obstacles inouïs, dompté les éléments indifférents et parfois hostiles du milieu pour en arriver à une stabilité relative, à un statut viable.

Avec les récents événements politiques et les mesures prises par les derniers gouvernements, la position plus que précaire occupée par la francophonie jusqu'à tout récemment semble s'améliorer. Plutôt que d'utiliser la grande partie des forces vives de la communauté francophone pour défendre des positions chèrement acquises, il semble qu'on puisse maintenant songer à bâtir sur ces positions les fondations d'un avenir prometteur.

Comme toutes les races et toutes les idéologies le savent bien, c'est dans les écoles et par l'éducation que s'apprennent et se transmettent les valeurs fondamentales qui sont au cœur d'un peuple. C'est pour cette raison que l'école d'expression française s'est toujours retrouvée au centre des préoccupations majeures des Franco-Ontariennes et Franco-Ontariens et est l'objet des plus tenaces réclamations.

Notre présentation ne diffère sans doute pas beaucoup du nombre imposant d'interventions similaires que nous avons faites au cours de notre histoire. Elle se résume sans doute en peu de mots: nous voulons une éducation en français à caractère francophone, autonome, équivalente,

équitablement soutenue par les deniers publics pour nous assurer à nous, citoyens et citoyennes, partenaires de toujours dans l'édification de notre pays, de notre province, la place qui nous revient de par nos droits constitutionnels.

Mme Castonguay: Je suis Lise Castonguay, de l'Association des surintendantes et des surintendants franco-ontariens.

Le gouvernement, le ministère de l'Éducation, se pose de sérieuses questions face au phénomène des décrocheuses et des décrocheurs. Il a tout à fait raison de s'inquiéter du haut pourcentage de jeunes qui quittent l'école avant d'avoir terminé leurs études secondaires.

Beaucoup de commentaires ont été faits sur les conclusions et les recommandations très controversées du rapport Radwanski. Nous n'avons pas l'intention de refaire cette démarche ici. Qu'il nous soit simplement permis d'apporter quelques réflexions d'ordre général dans les domaines touchés par le rapport.

Dans toute planification de changement ou de réforme, il ne faut surtout pas perdre de vue l'objet de la réforme, la population visée. Remarquez que le rapport Radwanski ne fait aucunement mention des élèves francophones qui sont dans les écoles françaises de l'Ontario. Quelles que soient les suites données au rapport, il est essentiel de procéder à une consultation sérieuse avec les principaux intervenants. C'est la seule façon de s'assurer que les suites données seront pertinentes aux francophones.

Il semble que le rapport Radwanski oublie que l'école aujourd'hui, dans le rôle que lui confère la société, diffère de beaucoup du modèle d'école imaginé dans le rapport.

Madam Chairman: Excuse me. Could you slow down, please? The translator is just having a bit of a problem. Lentement, s'il vous plaît. Merci.

Mme Castonguay: C'est très bien. Je vais reprendre juste un peu.

Il semble que le rapport Radwanski oublie que l'école aujourd'hui, dans le rôle que lui confère la société, diffère de beaucoup du modèle d'école imaginé dans le rapport. Avant d'exiger que l'école redevienne strictement un lieu où s'acquerraient et se mesurent les connaissances académiques, il faudrait repenser la structure organisationnelle du ministère de l'Éducation afin que les politiques et les programmes qui touchent les écoles françaises soient pensés pour les écoles françaises.

Il faudrait aussi s'assurer que le reste des structures sociales reprennent les rôles qu'elles ont graduellement confiés à l'école aujourd'hui,

soit la famille, le cercle parental agrandi, le quartier et le cercle d'amis, les mouvements religieux.

D'autre part, au lieu d'entériner les recommandations du rapport, qui semblent suggérer un virage radical vers les approches d'autrefois, nous aimerions que les mesures éducatives mises en place depuis quelques années et les nouveaux programmes à peine sortis des presses puissent avoir le temps de prouver leur efficacité.

Je voudrais vous parler un peu du processus éducatif. Le système d'éducation de l'Ontario se compare généralement bien aux programmes d'autres provinces, d'autres nations dites développées. Or, l'organisation présente ne produit pas toujours les résultats escomptés. Nos élèves de langue française ne soutiennent pas toujours la comparaison dans les concours internationaux, particulièrement en sciences et en mathématiques.

Dans certains milieux, à cause de l'environnement assimilateur, plusieurs de nos élèves éprouvent d'énormes difficultés à utiliser correctement leur langue maternelle, le français. C'est pourquoi le renouveau pédagogique nous semble si important à l'élémentaire. Un grand nombre de jeunes abandonnent leurs études avant la fin du secondaire, et le taux de passage de nos jeunes francophones au niveau postsecondaire est nettement insuffisant.

Nous croyons que de réels problèmes existent. Le rapport Radwanski remet en question le système d'éducation de l'Ontario. Nous aimerions discuter de quatre aspects précis de ce rapport.

Notre premier commentaire portera sur la répartition sélective et le classement homogène des élèves. La répartition sélective des élèves en groupes homogènes selon les voies fondamentale, générale et avancée est le mode d'organisation le plus utilisé dans les écoles secondaires de l'Ontario.

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M. Radwanski semble rejeter sur le classement homogène plusieurs des malaises sociaux des écoles. À notre avis, il a regardé d'une façon bien superficielle le phénomène de la répartition sélective en groupes homogènes et ses conclusions sont prématurées. Nous croyons que le classement homogène des élèves demeure une solution préférable à l'autre possibilité, celle de regrouper tous les élèves sans égard à leurs besoins particuliers ou à leurs aspirations. Nous ne sommes pas assurés que la solution de M. Radwanski produira de meilleurs résultats. Le regroupement en classes homogènes est, à

notre avis, une solution avantageuse pour nos jeunes francophones.

Notre deuxième commentaire portera sur le passage des élèves d'une année scolaire à l'autre.

La promotion académique des élèves selon le groupe d'âge, indépendamment des résultats académiques, a toujours soulevé une vive controverse. Plusieurs d'entre nous avons vécu l'époque où il n'était pas rare de trouver des élèves qui avaient passé deux ou trois années supplémentaires aux cycles primaire et moyen pour redoubler encore une fois les premières années du cycle intermédiaire et, enfin, recevoir leur diplôme, en huitième année, à l'âge de seize ou 17 ans.

Croire que la menace de devoir reprendre une année réglerait la situation des décrocheuses et des décrocheurs ne nous paraît pas sérieux. C'est regarder d'une façon superficielle et simpliste un problème qui a des racines beaucoup plus étendues et beaucoup plus profondes. Les écoles devraient être encouragées à se servir d'instruments de dépistage des décrocheuses et des décrocheurs potentiels. Nous sommes confiants que les programmes pilotes qui ont lieu présentement dans plusieurs endroits en Ontario nous permettront de trouver des solutions additionnelles au problème des décrocheuses et des décrocheurs.

Je vous passe maintenant M. Jacques Hallé.

M. Hallé: Bonjour. Je suis Jacques Hallé, président de l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens.

Ce matin, j'aurai l'occasion de vous parler un peu du système de semestres, des Écoles de l'Ontario aux cycles intermédiaire et supérieur et d'entreprendre peut-être une discussion sur le parallélisme au niveau du ministère de l'Éducation.

Comme vous le savez, depuis un certain nombre d'années – on pourrait dire une vingtaine d'années – dans nos écoles secondaires partout dans la province, nous exploitons certaines façons d'organiser nos écoles. Une façon qui prédomine dans tout cela, c'est bien celle de l'organisation de l'année scolaire en semestres à crédit complet. Nous retrouvons présentement, dans nos écoles secondaires, au moins les deux tiers de nos écoles qui procèdent de cette façon. Alors, on peut dire que le système de semestres n'est plus sous sa forme expérimentale mais bien qu'il est employé par la majorité de nos écoles secondaires.

En parlant du système de semestres, il faut en rechercher les avantages. Il y en a plusieurs. Vous les connaissez sans doute, les avantages du système de semestres; je n'ai donc pas à

les énumérer. Maintenant, on pourra peut-être passer à une discussion plus longue si, à un moment donné, vous avez des questions.

Vous savez sans doute que, dans le conseil de Hamilton, qui sert d'exemple présentement, en 1986 on a formé un comité qui avait pour mandat d'étudier le système de semestres. Je peux dire que le comité est revenu en recommandant que le régime de semestres à crédit complet prédomine comme organisation de l'année scolaire.

Toutefois, le même comité encourageait les directions d'école à y apporter des modifications ou à expérimenter avec d'autres approches. Alors, une suggestion qu'on aurait à faire, c'est que les directeurs et directrices de nos écoles aient un certain pouvoir de changer, peut-être, certains cours.

Un des désavantages du système de semestres est sans doute le fait que certains de nos élèves peuvent terminer leur cours secondaire à la fin de janvier, ce qui occasionne certains problèmes pour les élèves qui se dirigent vers le postsecondaire et qui doivent attendre au mois de septembre suivant pour entreprendre des études au postsecondaire, étant donné qu'on ne peut pas s'inscrire à un cours à l'université passé le début de janvier. Alors, il y aurait peut-être moyen de changer ou d'améliorer le système ou la façon d'agir au niveau postsecondaire, de façon à encourager nos élèves à poursuivre leurs études tout de suite, une fois le secondaire terminé.

Les Écoles de l'Ontario aux cycles intermédiaire et supérieur: On sait sans doute que le résultat d'EOCIS, c'est une concertation pédagogique d'envergure à laquelle toute la province a participé, et on se souvient que la population de l'Ontario a eu l'occasion de répondre et de réagir à au moins deux documents avant l'adoption d'EOCIS. Voilà une des raisons pour lesquelles nous appuyons le programme EOCIS et nous vous recommandons de vous en tenir à ce programme.

Maintenant, le facteur le plus important dans tout cela, comme dans tout changement, est le facteur temps. Je crois qu'il est très important de se réserver le temps de voir si nous avons vraiment réussi avec EOCIS avant de tout chambarder dans le système d'éducation. Comme vous le savez, tous ces changements-là demandent beaucoup de temps.

Avant de condamner tout programme, il faut avoir eu l'occasion de travailler et d'avoir tous les outils nécessaires, de façon à répondre aux besoins de tous nos élèves. Malgré les opinions contraires de Radwanski dans son rapport, nous – et je pense que tous nos membres ici à la table

vont vous dire la même chose — nous nous opposons à une augmentation du nombre de cours obligatoires chez nos francophones.

Vous savez qu'il y a seize cours obligatoires au secondaire. Présentement, nos francophones en ont 19 sur 30, étant donné que, afin d'obtenir des élèves qui soient vraiment bilingues, on oblige nos élèves au niveau secondaire à suivre trois autres cours d'anglais. Ils ont donc les cinq cours de français, plus les cours d'anglais à suivre. Cela leur donne 19 cours obligatoires sur 30.

Nous savons que ça crée une certaine pression chez nos élèves, mais comme je vous l'ai dit tout à l'heure, ce serait beaucoup plus facile si les directeurs des écoles avaient l'occasion, à un moment donné, de discuter avec certains élèves qui sont peut-être moins doués que d'autres et de changer un certain nombre de cours, peut-être juste un cours, de façon à les encourager à suivre un cours en études coopératives ou en mécanique, par exemple.

À ce moment-ci, j'aimerais aborder le sujet de parallélisme au ministère de l'Éducation. Vous êtes sans doute au courant du fait que nous avons déjà fait un certain nombre de présentations; nous avons rencontré le Sous-ministre adjoint, le ministre de l'Éducation (M. Ward) et le secrétaire du Premier Ministre. Vous savez que la Loi 75 remet entre les mains de nos francophones la gestion de leurs écoles.

Moi, je trouve anormal que les francophones aient la gestion de leurs écoles et que la personne responsable de l'éducation des francophones au ministère de l'Éducation, le sous-ministre adjoint, éducation franco-ontarienne, n'ait pas de pouvoir de décision. Si nous regardons la structure du ministère de l'Éducation, nous ne trouvons aucun directeur francophone.

Alors, je crois qu'il n'est pas normal de ne pas avoir au moins quelques francophones qui seraient responsables de l'éducation des Franco-Ontariens partout dans la province. Selon moi, il est essentiel que le sous-ministre adjoint, éducation franco-ontarienne, soit investi du pouvoir lui permettant au moins de planifier, de mettre en oeuvre et de gérer des services en langue française, et qu'on désigne comme sous-ministre adjoint des responsables de l'éducation franco-ontarienne.

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Nous recherchons donc, au sein du ministère de l'Éducation, un mécanisme de coordination. Vous savez sans doute que le gouvernement du Nouveau-Brunswick a accordé aux gens du Nouveau-Brunswick un système parallèle au niveau du ministère de l'Éducation, même si le

nombre de francophones est moindre qu'en Ontario. Alors, nous espérons que nous ferons de même dans notre chère province. Je vous remercie.

Mme Ladouceur: Bonjour, je suis Jocelyne Ladouceur et je représente l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario.

Comme nous l'avons mentionné tout à l'heure, le fondement philosophique de l'éducation en Ontario est de donner à tout apprenant de nos écoles l'occasion de se développer dans la pleine mesure de ses capacités physiques, intellectuelles et morales. Cette philosophie peut se résumer en disant que chacun doit avoir des chances égales en éducation en Ontario. C'est ce que l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario réclame depuis plus de 40 ans.

Durant les quelques minutes qui me sont accordées aujourd'hui, j'ai l'intention de me pencher sur ce droit aux chances égales en éducation dans le contexte de trois domaines précis: la gestion scolaire, le financement de l'éducation et la représentation de la population au sein des conseils scolaires.

D'abord, la gestion: La Charte canadienne des droits et libertés confère aux Franco-Ontariens le droit à l'instruction dans la langue de la minorité, là où le nombre le justifie. La Loi sur l'éducation reconnaît le droit à l'éducation en langue française, quel que soit le nombre. La décision de 1984 de la Cour d'appel de l'Ontario précise que les Franco-Ontariens ont le droit de gérer, c'est-à-dire de contrôler, leurs établissements scolaires. Finalement, le jugement Sirois déclare que les Franco-Ontariens ont le droit de recevoir la même qualité d'éducation que celle dont bénéficie la majorité et que les coûts afférents doivent être défrayés à même les deniers publics. Comment donc s'expliquer que les Franco-Ontariens continuent d'être traités comme citoyens de second ordre en matière d'éducation?

D'abord, la Loi sur l'éducation ne confère pas la gestion complète de ses établissements à la population franco-ontarienne. Le contrôle dont elle dispose est mitigé, et le nombre minimal de conseillers scolaires est insuffisant pour permettre une saine gestion. En outre, dans bien des coins de la province, les conseillers scolaires francophones doivent faire face à une administration scolaire de la majorité bien campée et peu encline à accepter de mettre en oeuvre les changements qui lui sont imposés par la Loi 75.

Il en résulte des appels innombrables à la Commission des langues d'enseignement de l'Ontario, des poursuites judiciaires interminables et une frustration générale, sans pour autant

que la situation des élèves franco-ontariens dans nos écoles ne s'améliore.

Au moment de l'adoption de la Loi 75, certains disaient avec optimisme que le temps était venu de consolider nos gains. Malheureusement, la réalité ne s'est pas avérée telle. Alors que nos garanties constitutionnelles ont été confirmées par la plus haute instance judiciaire de la province et que le gouvernement a même commencé à se diriger vers la reconnaissance complète de ces droits, dans le vécu de tous les jours, nous devons continuer à nous battre contre ceux qui refusent de reconnaître ces mêmes droits.

Il est clair que les chances ne sont pas égales en Ontario. Pour la minorité, un droit devient inévitablement l'objet d'une lutte, et le respect accordé à ce droit est trop souvent proportionnel aux coûts qu'il entraîne.

La Cour d'appel affirmait dans sa décision de 1984 que l'école de langue française devait refléter l'étoffe même de la culture de la minorité. La structure actuelle des conseils scolaires à deux secteurs, l'un de la majorité et l'autre de la minorité, avec d'importants pouvoirs centralisés – notamment l'établissement du taux de taxe et du budget global – est un obstacle à la réalisation de cet objectif. La seule solution de ces difficultés, c'est la création de conseils scolaires de langue française sur tout le territoire de l'Ontario.

Je me permets de citer un extrait du mémoire présenté par l'Association lors des audiences du Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales sur le projet de loi 75:

«L'AFCSO croit fermement que la Cour d'appel a reconnu à la minorité francophone de l'Ontario le droit à un contrôle réel et efficace de ses écoles. C'est pourquoi elle tient absolument à répéter ici que cela exige la création de conseils scolaires exclusivement francophones partout en Ontario... C'est là l'objectif que se sont fixé les conseillers scolaires et les membres francophones de CCLF et que l'AFCSO entend bien poursuivre jusqu'à ce qu'il soit atteint.»

C'était en 1986. Depuis lors, nous attendons avec impatience que le gouvernement agisse pour accorder à tous les Franco-Ontariens ce qu'il vient d'accorder à la population d'Ottawa-Carleton. Sinon, l'objectif de chances égales pour tous ne peut être réalisé.

Maintenant, le financement: Même si les Franco-Ontariens parviennent, à la longue, à obtenir le contrôle complet de leur système d'éducation, le principe de chances égales sera toujours violé si le financement de ce système

n'est pas modifié. On se souviendra que la décision Sirois stipule que les Franco-Ontariens ont le droit de recevoir, à même les deniers publics, une éducation équivalente à celle de la majorité.

De nombreux facteurs font en sorte que ce droit n'est pas respecté. D'abord, le financement général de l'éducation en Ontario est inéquitable. En 1975, le gouvernement contribuait, par voie de subventions, 61,3 pour cent des coûts de l'éducation aux paliers élémentaire et secondaire. En 1987, cette contribution n'atteignait que 47 pour cent du total des coûts. En réduisant ainsi son taux de subvention, le gouvernement augmentait la proportion des frais à payer par la taxe foncière. Il est important de se rappeler que lorsqu'un conseil scolaire dépasse le plafond des dépenses établi par la province, l'excédent de ces dépenses est financé entièrement par la taxe foncière.

Mme la Présidente: Excusez-moi. Lentement, s'il vous plaît.

Mme Ladouceur: Trop vite?

Si le gouvernement établit un seuil de dépenses irréaliste, il détruit le principe de base, celui d'accorder à chaque élève une chance égale d'obtenir des services éducatifs de qualité. Les conseils scolaires riches en évaluation peuvent se permettre d'offrir des services accrus, tandis que leurs petits cousins pauvres, pour leur part, ne peuvent offrir de services comparables sans surcharger les contribuables d'un fardeau excessif et intolérable au chapitre de l'impôt foncier.

En 1983, les conseils scolaires regroupant 90 pour cent des élèves à l'élémentaire dans les écoles publiques et 61 pour cent des élèves dans les écoles séparées, ont dépassé le plafond provincial de dépenses par élève. Au palier secondaire, ce fut le cas pour 99,8 pour cent des élèves. Ces données confirment que le plafond de base déterminé par la province est loin d'être adéquat.

Malgré les promesses gouvernementales de rétablir la contribution gouvernementale à 60 pour cent, la situation ne s'est guère améliorée depuis ce moment-là. Dans ce contexte où le gouvernement provincial réduit sa contribution au coût total de l'éducation et maintient à un niveau artificiellement bas le plafond ouvrant droit aux subventions, deux catégories de conseils scolaires sont défavorisées: tous les conseils séparés qui n'ont pas accès à la taxe industrielle et commerciale, et les conseils séparés et publics qui sont pauvres en évaluation résidentielle, industrielle et commerciale.

Les conseils scolaires des régions urbaines et industrielles peuvent se permettre d'offrir plus à leur clientèle scolaire. Les autres, qui sont moins riches à cause de leur situation géographique ou économique, doivent se contenter de moins. Même les divers facteurs de pondération applicables ne réussissent pas à rétablir l'équité.

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L'injustice perpétrée envers les conseils à évaluation « pauvre » et envers tous les conseils séparés catholiques qui ne peuvent toucher la taxe industrielle et commerciale doit nécessairement être corrigée si on compte vraiment offrir des chances égales à tous.

Il existe des moyens de corriger ces inéquités, pourvu que le gouvernement puisse enfin se décider à agir. Il suffit de rétablir à 60 pour cent la contribution gouvernementale aux frais de l'éducation élémentaire et secondaire; d'établir le plafond des dépenses par élève ouvrant droit à des subventions à un niveau réaliste pour l'ensemble des conseils scolaires; et enfin, d'établir un système de redistribution des revenus de la taxe foncière sur les propriétés commerciales et industrielles parmi tous les conseils scolaires, compte tenu de leur population étudiante.

Toutes ces solutions sont déjà connues. Elles figurent dans le rapport Macdonald, qui a été déposé en décembre 1985, c'est-à-dire il y a presque quatre ans. Le gouvernement en a été saisi mais n'a pas eu, jusqu'à maintenant, la volonté politique d'agir.

Pour ce qui est des Franco-Ontariens en particulier, le problème est plus complexe puisque la population est plus petite et dispersée et que, par conséquent, il en coûte plus cher pour assurer la même qualité de service. Il faudra donc que le gouvernement accepte que, pour respecter ce droit fondamental et constitutionnel consacré dans la décision Sirois, il doit verser des sommes additionnelles. Sinon, les réformes ignoreront la spécificité franco-ontarienne.

Si la situation actuelle demeure inchangée, combien d'élèves franco-ontariens seront privés d'accès à la qualité d'éducation à laquelle ils ont droit et dont ils pourraient bénéficier? Si le gouvernement veut vraiment promouvoir la philosophie de chances égales pour tous, il devra agir dès maintenant. Nous attendons donc avec impatience les dispositions qui mettront fin à ce traitement injustifiable et inacceptable.

Finalement, la Loi 125 et le recensement: La Loi 125 a été adoptée dans le but d'assurer un mode plus démocratique de représentation de la population au sein des conseils scolaires. Le but

est louable. Malheureusement, la pratique, du moins pour ce qui est des francophones, l'est moins.

Les Franco-Ontariens, nous l'avons déjà dit, jouissent d'un droit de gestion de leurs écoles. Quand le gouvernement a adopté la Loi 75, c'était dans le but de se conformer aux dispositions constitutionnelles en matière de gestion scolaire pour la minorité.

La Loi 75 prévoit que le nombre de conseillers scolaires de la minorité au sein d'un conseil scolaire sera proportionnel au nombre d'élèves francophones dans ce conseil par rapport au total des élèves du conseil. La Loi 125 modifie cette disposition en stipulant que le nombre de conseillers scolaires de la minorité sera établi en utilisant la population totale comme base et en appliquant aux groupes de la minorité le même facteur électoral que celui qui a été calculé pour le groupe de la majorité au sein du conseil.

La Loi 75 prévoit également que les conseillers de langue française peuvent répartir les conseillers scolaires auxquels ils ont droit de la façon qu'ils trouvent la plus équitable et la plus appropriée à la population francophone du territoire.

La Loi 125 vient limiter cette disposition. Les conseillers francophones sont dorénavant assujettis aux mêmes restrictions que les conseillers de la majorité. Or, la décision de la Cour d'appel indiquait clairement que tel ne devait pas être le cas si le résultat était préjudiciable. Nous sommes d'avis que ces dispositions vont à l'encontre des droits conférés par la Charte et confirmés par la décision de la Cour d'appel de l'Ontario en 1984.

Malgré de nombreuses représentations faites auprès du gouvernement depuis deux ans, malgré le rapport du comité mixte qui s'est penché sur la question de la répartition des conseillers scolaires, on a encarcené les francophones, on a restreint leurs droits et on leur a imposé un mode de représentation qui, à notre avis, n'est pas conforme à la constitution.

Le Comité mixte sur la répartition des conseillers scolaires avait recommandé que, au moins pour les élections de 1988, les dispositions de la Loi 75 soient appliquées aux francophones en Ontario. Cette recommandation a été rejetée. Pourtant, son bien-fondé n'a pas à être démontré. On n'a qu'à constater les résultats déplorables du recensement pour conclure que la Loi 75 aurait dû s'appliquer en 1988.

De nombreux porte-parole gouvernementaux ont laissé entendre que les erreurs constatées dans les résultats du recensement étaient attribua-

bles aux contribuables eux-mêmes, qui s'étaient mal identifiés ou qui n'avaient pas répondu au questionnaire. Les faits démontrent que ces spéculations sont fausses. Dans bien des cas, les gens ont obtenu une copie de leur formulaire et peuvent prouver sans aucun doute qu'ils avaient bien répondu aux questions. Il demeure aussi que le questionnaire, dans sa version française, comportait des erreurs qui ont fait que de nombreuses personnes n'ont pas inclus les noms de leurs enfants de moins de 18 ans.

Finalement, on a imposé aux francophones de s'identifier comme tels, tandis que cette question n'a pas été posée aux autres personnes qui étaient énumérées. C'est de la discrimination pure et simple. Qui plus est, quiconque a négligé, pour quelque raison que ce soit, de répondre au questionnaire a été automatiquement inclus dans le groupe public anglophone: double discrimination, tant sur le plan confessionnel que linguistique.

Compte tenu de tout ce que je viens de souligner, nous demandons que soient invalidés les articles de la Loi 125 qui se rapportent aux francophones; que soient invalidés les résultats du recensement se rapportant aux groupes électoraux; et que soit augmenté à cinq le nombre minimal de conseillers scolaires de la minorité. Sinon, les francophones se trouvent privés de la gestion minimale à laquelle ils avaient droit en vertu de la Loi 75. Par conséquent, le principe de chances égales pour tous devient une farce pour la minorité dans cette province.

Nous ne demandons pas la mer à boire, nous demandons simplement un statut égal à celui de la majorité.

Mme Soucie: Je vais conclure brièvement. Si la société pouvait se définir en termes de besoins, si elle pouvait tracer le portrait de la citoyenne et du citoyen qu'exigera sa survie dans les années à venir, il serait beaucoup plus simple pour les politiciennes et politiciens d'investir tant efforts et d'argent dans la formation de la génération de demain. Mais demain ne se laisse pas facilement deviner.

Le monde du travail et de l'industrie nous dit: Formez des gens qui répondent aux normes industrielles et peuvent accomplir les tâches spécifiques que nous avons à offrir. Il nous manque de la main-d'oeuvre spécialisée, nous devons demeurer compétitifs.

Le monde financier nous dit: Donnez-nous des gens qui savent planifier et compter.

Les humanistes nous disent: Donnez-nous des gens qui savent penser, résoudre les problèmes de la vie, s'adapter aux circonstances et survivre.

Si nos parents et nos grands-parents n'avaient appris que les techniques appropriées à leur temps pour répondre aux exigences des emplois des années 30, nous n'aurions pas eu la chance de vivre dans un monde en pleine évolution, tel que nous le connaissons aujourd'hui. Pour notre communauté franco-ontarienne, le système d'éducation est d'une importance primordiale. Nous nous sommes battus pour y obtenir nos droits, nous nous sommes battus pour arracher aux divers gouvernements des projets de loi qui ont fait progresser notre communauté.

Nous ne sommes pas au bout de nos peines, il nous reste encore à implanter partout sur le territoire des conseils scolaires de langue française, à organiser un réseau d'institutions postsecondaires de langue française, à obtenir un financement juste et équivalent pour tous nos conseils scolaires. Il nous reste, en somme, à obtenir dans toutes les sphères de nos activités un statut égal à celui de la majorité. Merci.

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Mme la Présidente: Merci pour votre présentation. La parole est à M. Johnston.

M. R. F. Johnston: Merci, Madame la Présidente, et merci bien pour la présentation. C'est un mémoire long et très important et nous n'avons pas beaucoup de temps pour poser des questions là-dessus.

Je crois comprendre, premièrement, que vous ressentez de grandes frustrations quant aux activités et aux non-activités de gérance et de financement, ainsi qu'aux problèmes avec la Loi 125, dont nous avons beaucoup parlé en Chambre. J'aimerais toutefois me concentrer sur les questions de la répartition sélective et du classement homogène, si je le peux. Cela aidera mon vocabulaire.

Il y a des exemples, dans le système catholique anglais, de conseils scolaires qui ont décidé de dire non à la répartition sélective et au classement homogène, à cause de leur philosophie, de leur sens de la communauté catholique. Ils voudraient réunir les élèves dans une classe et se concentrer sur les besoins de chaque élève, leurs problèmes individuels, mais dans une classe hétérogène. Selon moi, dans votre communauté il y a un sens de l'école comme étant une réflexion de la communauté. Je voudrais savoir pourquoi vous n'avez pas choisi la même interprétation de cette idée philosophique des classements hétérogène ou homogène.

Mme Castonguay: Monsieur Johnston, vous avez tout à fait raison de dire que, dans notre communauté francophone, il est important de se regrouper. Nous avons une philosophie qui nous

regroupe, justement. Par contre, lorsqu'on parle des classes, nous avons vu, dans les écoles que nous avons présentement, que le classement homogène est très profitable aux élèves, nous avons vu que ça répond aux besoins individuels des enfants. Nous nous sommes aperçus aussi que les aspirations de nos élèves ne sont pas toutes les mêmes. Donc, ce classement nous permet de mieux répondre aux enfants. C'est vraiment l'opinion de nos écoles, présentement.

M. R. F. Johnston: Avez-vous des exemples, dans les écoles secondaires de langue française, de classements hétérogènes, ou avez-vous uniquement des exemples, dans le système de votre communauté, de classements homogènes, comme dans le système anglais?

Mme Castonguay: Il y en a sûrement, mais je pense qu'ils seraient peu nombreux. Je ne pourrais pas les nommer à ce moment-ci, mais il serait certainement possible de vous donner de la documentation.

M. R. F. Johnston: Je voudrais savoir s'il y a des études qui comparent les résultats des deux, car si on regarde maintenant les résultats de certains groupes dans nos communautés qui sont classés au « vocational » — je ne sais pas le mot français pour cette classe... C'est quoi, le mot?

Mme Castonguay: Général ou technique.

M. R. F. Johnston: Technique, peut-être. On peut voir qu'il y a certaines classes dans notre société qui restent là; ce ne sont pas seulement des enfants, des jeunes d'une certaine capacité intellectuelle. Selon moi, c'est un problème.

Quelle est la philosophie de votre système en ce qui concerne les personnes physiquement ou mentalement handicapées? Essayez-vous de les intégrer dans les classes, ou plutôt de les séparer? À mon avis, d'après le sens philosophique du classement homogène, on peut dire que tous les handicapés doivent être dans une classe séparée; mais on essaie maintenant de les intégrer. Si on peut intégrer ceux-là, pourquoi pas les autres qui ont de moins grandes difficultés d'apprentissage?

Mme Castonguay: D'abord, les élèves handicapés, qui ont des besoins spéciaux, sont nettement intégrés autant que possible, tout en répondant à leurs besoins spécifiques. Dans les années passées, nous avons vécu des classes qui étaient hétérogènes, justement. Nous avons vécu un système basé sur cette façon de voir, et puis c'est en comparant les deux systèmes que nous voyons et nous croyons que le système présent répond mieux aux besoins de nos élèves.

Mme la Présidente: Merci, Monsieur Johnston. Avez-vous d'autres questions?

M. R. F. Johnston: Vous avez dit que les deux tiers de vos écoles sont maintenant sous le système de semestres, et pour ce qui est des problèmes qui découlent du mouvement qui se fait dans cette direction...

M. Hallé: Je ne pense pas que j'aie mentionné qu'on avait des problèmes, j'ai mentionné qu'au moins les deux tiers de nos écoles sont présentement sous le système de semestres. Il y a certaines écoles qui ont ce système depuis seulement quelques années.

Nous avons trouvé plusieurs avantages au système de semestres puisque, comme vous le savez, les élèves, du moins à la fin de chaque semestre, ont l'occasion de réfléchir et de dire: « Bien, qu'est-ce que je peux faire présentement au lieu d'attendre la fin de l'année? » Si l'élève a échoué à un cours, il peut le reprendre tout de suite, comme toute autre chose. Vous allez trouver des désavantages au système de semestres, mais il y a quand même toujours moyen de l'améliorer, et c'est le système présent qui est préféré dans nos écoles partout dans la province.

M. R. F. Johnston: Nous avons trouvé que beaucoup de ces écoles mixtes ont des horaires semestriels et généraux, ordinaires. Est-ce le cas dans votre système? Vos écoles ont-elles adopté exclusivement un système de semestres?

M. Hallé: La plupart des écoles sont sous le système de semestres, mais je sais que, dans certaines écoles, on essaie de faire le lien entre les deux pour répondre aux besoins de certains élèves parce que, comme je l'ai dit tout à l'heure, il y a des désavantages, surtout chez les élèves qui sont reconnus comme étant moins doués. Pour eux, il est assez difficile de suivre, pendant une période assez longue, un cours de français, par exemple. Alors, dans certaines écoles, on essaie de relier les deux, le système de semestres et l'horaire traditionnel.

M. R. F. Johnston: Une dernière question: Avez-vous eu le même changement dans les cours d'éducation technique de votre système scolaire que dans le système anglophone, c'est-à-dire qu'il y a maintenant moins d'élèves suivant des cours d'éducation technique depuis l'établissement d'EOCIS qu'auparavant? C'est un changement récent. On dit que de plus en plus d'enfants rentrent dans le système anglophone, surtout des jeunes qui avaient quitté l'école et qui reviennent maintenant.

M. Hallé: Oui, ce sont certainement des cours qui intéressent les élèves qui sont portés à

décrocher plus tôt. Une suggestion que j'ai déjà mentionnée tout à l'heure, c'est que le directeur ou la directrice de l'école secondaire puisse avoir le choix — juste pour vous donner un exemple — de remplacer le cinquième cours de français pour certains de ses élèves par un cours d'éducation technique ou d'éducation coopérative, de façon à encourager ces élèves; car vous savez, comme moi, que la meilleure façon d'encourager les élèves, c'est par le succès.

M. R. F. Johnston: Est-ce un plus grand problème pour les écoles catholiques et francophones, à cause de la nécessité de donner des cours de religion aussi, et parce que le temps qui reste est insuffisant pour les autres options?

M. Hallé: Ce pourrait être le cas dans les écoles où l'on exige que les élèves suivent certains cours de religion. À un moment donné, ça devient, pour ces élèves-là, un ou deux autres cours obligatoires. Alors, sur les 30 cours, on en est déjà rendu à 19. Si vous avez 20 ou 21 cours qui sont déjà prédéterminés, il est assez difficile pour les élèves de choisir les autres.

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Mme Soucie: J'aimerais soulever le point suivant par rapport à votre question sur l'horaire «semestré» ou «non semestré» dans une école. Surtout avec l'avènement d'EOCIS, plusieurs élèves pourraient terminer leur scolarité du secondaire en quatre ans et demi, ce qui les amènerait à la fin de janvier. M. Hallé a mentionné tout à l'heure que ça présentait une difficulté pour ces élèves qui n'ont pas accès au postsecondaire à ce moment-là de l'année scolaire.

Cette difficulté est peut-être plus grande dans la communauté franco-ontarienne quand on considère notre plus haut taux d'étudiants qui ne parviennent pas au niveau postsecondaire. Alors, le fait de pouvoir quitter l'école après quatre ans et demi avec le certificat d'études secondaires, rend les étudiants aptes à se trouver un emploi dans les mois qui suivent, pour terminer l'année scolaire. Très souvent, des jeunes vont tout simplement décrocher à ce moment-là au lieu d'accéder, comme ils le feraient dans un cursus normal, à des études postsecondaires.

Donc, cette question de l'horaire «semestré» par rapport à l'horaire «non semestré» devrait pouvoir mener à des discussions avec le niveau postsecondaire. Je pense à des choses très novatrices, comme la révision totale du calendrier scolaire actuel, qui n'est tout simplement pas fait pour diviser l'année scolaire, par exemple, avec l'horaire des universités qui, elles, sont «semestrees» mais à partir de

septembre-décembre et janvier-avril. Alors, il n'y a pas de concordance, et ce manque de concordance entre les paliers postsecondaire et secondaire est une difficulté peut-être plus évidente pour les francophones que pour les élèves de la majorité.

M. R. F. Johnston: Y a-t-il des exemples d'universités qui donnent des cours en français — l'Université d'Ottawa, par exemple — qui commencent maintenant leur semestre en février?

Mme Soucie: En février? Non.

M. R. F. Johnston: Il y en a un ou deux exemples parmi les universités anglophones, je pense.

Mme Soucie: Par exception, un étudiant supérieur serait plutôt soulagé de l'enseignement et des examens en janvier et admis au postsecondaire, mais c'est vraiment par exception.

M. R. F. Johnston: Merci.

Mme la Présidente: Une dernière question, M. Mahoney.

Mr. Mahoney: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I will have to ask mine in English, if you do not mind.

Your brief dealt with industrial-commercial assessment, the pooling and the better distribution of that, recognizing that there are really two aspects, one being the sharing between the two systems and the other being the sharing between, for lack of a better word, the have and have-not communities.

Again, by way of explanation, when communities have a substantial amount of industrial and commercial assessment, they subsequently tend to have a substantial amount of residential assessment, a lot of kids and a lot of requirements. How do you tell the communities that are under tremendous pressure, the growth communities, that we are going to take a portion of their industrial and commercial assessment and put it into other areas that are of less growth, therefore just exacerbating the funding problem in those high-growth communities?

Ms. Ladouceur: It is certainly not an easy question to answer and it does not have a simple answer. I think, first of all, that those communities do not have a God-given right to the commercial and industrial taxes from General Motors, Bell Canada or whatever. Because everybody uses those products and everybody contributes, the returns should go back to everybody. It really is not fair that, through geographical accident, some communities are favoured and others are not.

This whole issue of growing boards and the greater needs and expectations that have been created in the population goes way beyond the question of pooling of industrial and commercial taxes. We dealt briefly with the question of the government's contribution to education and the fact that it has dropped substantially over the last 15 years or so. Just re-establishing the level of 60 per cent would help those communities. It is a fact that the need for capital expenditures in growing boards is not being met, because the requests are five or six times as large as the moneys that are being put in the budgets for those things.

I come from the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Our fellow board, the Carleton Board of Education, is also a growing board. We get all the growth in the area of Ottawa-Carleton because that is where all the new developments are, and we got a substantial amount of money from the government last year, but it was a drop in the bucket if you compare it to what we need.

It is a complex problem. While I can understand that someone who has something does not want to give it up, I think the only way you can do it is to bite the bullet, tell them it is not fair and distribute it fairly on a per pupil basis across the province. Then at least everyone will have a fair deal out of the whole thing.

Mme la Présidente: Merci pour votre présentation d'aujourd'hui.

Mme Soucie: Merci.

M. Hallé: Merci beaucoup.

Madam Chairman: Our next deputation is the Nepean Symphony Orchestra. While Mr. Wegg is taking his place at the microphone, perhaps I could make an announcement for the benefit of the members.

We have two changes to the agenda. At two o'clock we will be seeing the arts advisory committee of the Ottawa Board of Education and, at 2:30, the Canterbury High School parents' advisory committee. If you could note those two changes to your agenda, the committee will be adjourning back to this room at two o'clock sharp.

Hello, Mr. Wegg. Welcome to our committee. We look forward to your presentation. We have allocated a half-hour for your presentation, including question time for the members, so we hope your remarks will allow enough time at the end for questions. Please begin whenever you are ready. Would you introduce yourself officially for the purposes of electronic Hansard?

S. JAMES WEGG

Mr. Wegg: Sure. My name is James Wegg and I am the music director of the Nepean Symphony. It is a pleasure to be here to speak to you today about the philosophy of education and, specifically, my topic, the role of music in fulfilling a comprehensive education.

It is the purpose of this brief to give you an overview of the role that music has to play in the development of young minds. The music programs currently existing in Ontario are woefully inadequate, for numerous reasons. These inadequacies will be dealt with in this paper. Commenting on the suggested topic areas of grade promotion, semesters, streaming and OSIS is accordingly not appropriate until the larger issue has been addressed.

I spend all of my time working with music. My performance experiences as a conductor are mainly from my positions as music director of the Nepean Symphony Orchestra, the Deep River Symphony Orchestra and the Savoy Society of Ottawa. My educational activities are also quite extensive, as music director of the Symphony School, the Ottawa-Carleton Summer Orchestra and the Ottawa Valley Summer Orchestra. I have two music degrees, a bachelor of music from the University of Ottawa and a master of fine arts from Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. I am not qualified to teach in the schools of this province.

Before I begin, I will give two definitions of mine: Music is the art of communicating thoughts and ideas through sound, and education is leading out of ignorance.

What is your level of understanding of the following statements?

1. Education is the most important gift we give to our children.

2. $E = mc^2$.

3. [Musical extract]

In a literate society it is generally agreed that everyone should be able to read and write in at least one language and be able to work with and understand numbers. Should we all not be able to understand the third statement? Is music an important part of our lives?

Education is as old as man. The curriculum of one of the first-known schools contained the following course outline, this from Durant's *The Life of Greece*:

"The curriculum has three divisions—writing, music, and gymnastics.... Writing includes reading and arithmetic, which uses letters for numbers. Everyone learns to play the lyre, and

much of the material of instruction is put into poetical and musical form."

The ancient Greeks felt strongly about being able to work with and understand music to ensure a well-rounded education. Again I quote Durant: "In Arcadia all freemen studied music to the age of 30; everyone knew some instrument; and to be unable to sing was accounted a disgrace."

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In 1988, some 2,300 years after one of the greatest civilizations the world has known, the relative importance of music in education has deteriorated severely. This problem is not confined to Ontario.

Last February, I attended a conference in Claremont, California, entitled *Music in Post-Modern America*, which, among other things, addressed this important issue. Before examining our own situation, I would like to share with you the thoughts of our colleagues to the south, from a report I did about the third session of the conference, which was entitled "Musical Education: Responsibility and Opportunity."

"This session, in many ways, was the most thought-provoking of the entire conference. Of prime concern was the consensus that our (US) educational system was producing millions of musically illiterate students. It was recalled that a few decades ago virtually everyone completed primary education with the ability to read music, sing at sight and, for some, the beginnings of playing an instrument.

"The often-heard comment in Canada that 'music is a frill' was echoed by many of the speakers. It was felt that the understanding of music notation is as important to humanity as the ability to read and write languages or to understand and work with numbers.

"We were reminded of the furore created with the introduction of new math. There has been nothing like that kind of turmoil with the gradual, but steady, phasing out or deterioration of music programs.

"The entire music community must collectively shoulder part of the blame for allowing this slippage to happen. Now, to put things right, would take a Herculean effort. Are we up to the challenge?

"Vocal music was championed as a foil to the argument made by school boards that they do not have enough money to outfit an instrumental program. Here too there was great concern that the vocal programs that do exist were 'popular' in their orientation (as are many current instrumental programs) where the emphasis is on current popular music that the students can identify with

and, accordingly, will want to play or sing. This demonstrates a continued feeling of insecurity on the part of the educators about the tremendous influence classical music of all types can have on the young mind when it is properly presented and nurtured. We (US) also have teachers who themselves are somewhat illiterate regarding the entire field of serious music.

"At the university level, it was said that those who did come out for choral music were very unprepared in their ability to read music or sing pitches as compared to 30 years ago.

"The mood of the conference seemed to turn to the idea that nothing short of a revolution would turn this decline around.

"Another issue that received a good deal of comment and attention was the problem of what a musician should know at the various stages of his development. It was pointed out that as time goes on, there is more to know but the same or even less time to learn (i.e., with university: four years long but only 24 to 26 teaching weeks per year).

"Everyone agreed that learning in music never stops but it has become increasingly difficult for the entire spectrum of education, from kindergarten to the doctoral level, to co-ordinate the approaches so that students are properly prepared to move on to the next level or institution. No immediate remedy was suggested to this difficult problem.

"As an aside, much was made of music education as a received tradition in its one-to-one private lesson format. Due largely to economics, the percentage of a student's time spent in this setting is decreasing.

"The final speaker at this session was a band director who had to deal with the problem that the largest percentage of time devoted to music in high schools went to the marching band....

"Finally, in this session of the conference, the statement was made that the very young need energy and passion. How can the confinement of concert halls compete with rock concerts, where the audience can feel free to make noise, move around and even dance in the aisles? Perhaps the solution here is to enable the young listener to fulfil the need of energy and passion by exercising the mind and the senses; but these minds must be prepared for the experience.

"Selected conclusions:

"1. A very large proportion of the public is unaware of the role that music can play in their spiritual wellbeing.

"2. Formal education at all levels is not producing (a) a musically literate and interested public or (b) musically oriented musicians.

"3. General music programs in public schools have abandoned their role in instilling the need for and appreciation of serious music.

"4. The capacity for our youth to accept and actively seek out classical music of all types should not be underestimated."

Here, in Ontario, there are two main problems that are similar to those just described: (1) Music is not accepted as a nonoptional subject in our schools, and (2) the music programs that do exist are not producing musically literate graduates. The proof of (1) is obvious from the current curriculum structure. The proof of (2) warrants further study.

At the primary level some semblance of music is used in the biannual presentations made by the students to their parents. I have witnessed my own children as well as their colleagues up to the grade 3 level "perform" songs. The extremely low level of basic pulse, rhythm and pitch accuracy is in itself very distressing. That both teachers and parents reward this type of bad performance with praise and applause I find deeply discouraging.

Many properly prepared church and secular choirs—for example, the Vienna Boys' Choir—have proved for years that the kind of cute performance referred to above is not necessary. The abilities of our younger students have been woefully underestimated and these songs, learned entirely by rote, do nothing to enhance the literacy of these students.

It is here, at the earliest stages of development, that our best music teachers are required. In many ways, more harm than good is done by the current attempts at beginning music education.

The great bulk of our current music education system revolves around instrumental music. In most boards, the beginnings of this are to be found in after-school group lessons. The very fact that these lessons are held after school hours prevents many students from enrolling.

Most students who do come to these classes have such little background that they must begin to learn the notation of music while at the same time grappling with an instrument for which they may or may not be suited. This is equivalent to being asked to speak a language without knowing the meaning of the words.

Having been a member of these classes for five years, I can identify, in retrospect, with these problems. Starting at the age of eight, I had been told by some sort of test that I was best suited for the clarinet. I dutifully purchased one and in a group with five to six others met once a week for 30 minutes. The bad habits developed there and

the information not received were enough to keep my future, nonboard, private teachers busy for years afterwards. It would have been better not to have started this way at all.

The reasons for this are threefold: (1) The teachers were not properly qualified. (2) In a group class of such short duration, the kind of individual attention needed was simply not possible. The reason for this kind of class being offered in the first place was simple: economics. (3) What I did learn in these classes had only to do with the clarinet, not music itself.

All instruments or voices are merely the vehicle which can enable a player to express the thoughts and ideas contained in the music. To teach instruments as an end in themselves would be similar to knowing thousands of words of vocabulary but not being able to construct a sentence and hence express an idea. This particular shortfall is evident in virtually all musical education from kindergarten through university.

In grade 7 and above, many schools have instrumental music courses offered during school hours. Here again, the teacher is required to perform a superhuman task, teach a wide variety of instruments, strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion, to groups of 30 or more in 40- to 50-minute periods. The expertise required of one individual is simply not reasonable. The bad habits go unchecked. The system is the culprit.

Because music is an optional course, it encourages a vicious circle. In order for the music teachers, many of whom do not teach the subject exclusively, to justify their job, there must be students enrolled in the course. Many teachers, accordingly, design their programs to appeal to the students for nonmusical reasons so that they will join or remain in the program. This leads to many social reasons for taking music, e.g., band trips and especially playing popular music so the students can identify with it. This kind of educational blackmail is as unfair to the students as it is to the teachers.

Even at its best, especially in secondary school, music is taught only to the minority of the student population. The results of this are most curious. Many students who do have a serious interest in music drop the subject at school as they find the music class too frivolous. Those who do graduate from high school having taken music are, in the main, still musically illiterate.

It would be most interesting to see how much Shakespeare would be taught in English courses if English courses became optional. "Never,"

you say. "English is vital to the development of all students." Music is not?

1220

I must now turn to some words that just hit the press on Friday from the music critic emeritus, Eric McLean, of the *Montreal Gazette*. I see we are talking the same line. I will quote briefly from Mr. McLean. He says:

"There was a time, not so very long ago, when the study of music was regarded as an essential part of everyone's education. In elementary school, every child was required to study not only arithmetic, language and literature, but some history of the visual arts, something of the stage and a considerable amount of music.... The number of people who know how music is made and who can distinguish a sophisticated creation from something simple-minded; yet who do do not count on music for a living—they are disappearing even faster than the piano factories.

"Who is the loser in all this? Music.

"The informed amateur has been as essential to the development of the art as the professional, and without him music could easily end up in a kind of limbo, feeding on nothing but its past.

"The obvious solution is for parents to impress upon school boards—and the government departments that finance them—the necessity of restoring an intelligent music program in the educational system. Make the kids sing, learn the notes, play an instrument and trash their earphones."

Thus says Mr. McLean. A few school boards have tried to address the arts problem by establishing high school programs exclusively for this domain. While well meaning, this approach is a case of too much too late. The first problem with this is, again, the question of numbers. From my experience working with some students attending this type of program, it is clear that the school standard of acceptance is too low. But without enough students, why have the program?

There is a larger problem. Many of the students enrolled in these special programs are encouraged at all levels to believe that they will have a career as an artist. The vast majority of them discover too late that this is not the case. They have not been properly prepared or their abilities have not been realistically assessed.

The situation speaks poorly for the integrity of the system that purports to develop the artistically gifted. It also further ghettoizes music and other art instruction. It precludes the great majority of students from discovering the joy of

music by focusing all instruction of this sort on the few.

The study of music is by no means entirely concerned with learning to play an instrument. The study of English is not entirely concerned with students becoming actors. Beginning an intensive study of the arts in grade 9 is many years too late. Like mathematics and English, it should begin for all at the beginning of education.

For the majority, the goal of study should not be the playing of an instrument. Rather, it should centre on the ability to understand and appreciate the vast body of repertoire spanning hundreds of years. That is a more important goal. This kind of result would enable all students to celebrate their humanity and be more complete persons. How many of us here today feel that their understanding of music has achieved such a level?

The universities which, in the main, train our teachers must also shoulder some of the blame for this situation. They are producing instrument teachers, not music teachers. They are taught a few things about a lot of instruments. Next they are thrust into a situation that is instrument oriented. Many of them are musically illiterate themselves. Many of them, for example, have not heard all nine Beethoven symphonies, much less understood them. It is ironic, for all of the reasons mentioned to date, that schools such as the Symphony School must exist.

Each year hundreds of students come to us, professional musicians, in a desire to learn about music. Many of them have abandoned the program that exists in their own schools. For our part, we have gone out of our way to co-operate with local school boards in the cause of music, with mixed results.

On the one hand, in the Nepean Symphony Orchestra we present some 50 educational concerts each year with the Carleton Board of Education. We share the financial expense. The orchestra travels to each school in kindergarten through grade 13. For many, it is their first experience with classical music and live professional musicians. Regrettably, economics limits the number of such presentations.

On the other hand, it was recently strongly suggested to us by officials from the Renfrew County Board of Education that our popular Ottawa Valley Summer Orchestra—this is a two-week overnight music camp held each year in Deep River—should become a credit course. It was pointed out that economically we could save a great deal of money by doing this. We declined. There were a host of logistical reasons regarding

fees, class size, site and so on, that could not be satisfactorily worked out. As well, none of our staff were qualified teachers. Most important, we knew that the kind of program we offered bore very little resemblance to what a credit course in music in Ontario currently means. Indeed, many of our students were taking our course to get the kind of instruction that is not available in their schools.

The bulk of this paper has been critical of the existing music programs in Ontario. It is also my intent to offer some constructive suggestions. However, before doing so, some questions need to be pondered.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Wegg, before you proceed, we have just over five minutes left, and I do not know whether you wish to go immediately to your suggestions or reserve some time for questions, but I just thought I would let you know.

Mr. Wegg: Okay. I will zip. The questions:

1. Should our own lack of understanding of a given field preclude the right of others to experience it?
2. Is music an important part of life?
3. Is understanding the language of music as important as English, French and mathematics?
4. How can an art form which has produced so many geniuses be regarded as optional or a frill?
5. How can those unacquainted with a field of study decide whether it should be optional or not?
6. Should students of all ages be given a complete education?
7. Does the ability to play an instrument guarantee an understanding of music?
8. Do we have the courage to change a system that is basically flawed?

The suggestions:

1. The subject of music should return as a nonoptional course at every level of education.
2. In order to achieve (1), the following steps need to be taken: (a) a complete redesign of music curriculum for all grades; (b) the realization that within these music courses instrumental music could be an option; (c) the complete redesign of teacher training to complement the new curriculum; (d) as well, the universities should be involved in ensuring a logical flow of music students from high school to university; (e) the temporary abandonment of high schools of the arts until the kindergarten-to-8 levels have been put into place.
3. The encouragement of school boards to work, wherever possible, with the professional musicians in their area in co-operative programs and facilities.

4. These suggestions will take a minimum of a generation to achieve.

The courage required and the challenge presented are immense. However, there is no question that we owe it to ourselves, our children and the future to begin to make the most universal of all arts resume its rightful place in our lives.

Mr. McGuinty: Thank you, Mr. Wegg, for your very stimulating and thought-provoking presentation. I wish I had time to discuss with you how thought is communicated by music, but I guess this is not the place for that. It is a very fascinating idea, though.

You render a thoughtful presentation and your very admirably idealistic concern a disservice, I think, by giving the elbow to a number of people. I was, for example, very intimately involved in the organization of the Canterbury School of the Arts during my tenure as an Ottawa Board of Education trustee, and I am not quite sure, unless you can document it, that the rather offhand dismissal of that program which you render on page 6 is quite justified. I wish the parents of that advisory committee were here now; they are going to be with us this afternoon.

I think the same holds true of the second paragraph on page 7. I have spent 31 years at five universities and I have known a lot of people involved in music departments and I do not recall having met people who are perhaps as incompetent as you suggest they generally are. Have you documented this? I do not think the professors I have met at Harvard University, Colgate University, Cornell University, the University of Toronto, the University of Ottawa or Carleton University are musically illiterate, although I cannot vouch for whether they have heard all nine of Beethoven's symphonies.

But do you have documentation for that kind of thing, that they are woefully inadequate at the university level and that the valiant efforts of some in the community to satisfy the need that you outline so vigorously, as in the school for the performing arts and at Canterbury, is really an exercise in futility or worse than that, misleading?

1230

Mr. Wegg: I believe my comments were certainly subjective. To deal with Canterbury first, on a couple of occasions, I have attended the career development days there when I speak to the students as a whole and we discuss what is optional and possible in a career, specifically in my instance, in music. The reason I come to my comments, or part of them, was that I hear many of the grade 9, 10 and 11 students feeling that

once they have finished Canterbury, they will go straight to university and once they have done that, they will audition and have a job, and this is just not how it works.

Mr. McGuinty: Does it work that way with everyone? Is that not a fact of life, that the young are idealistic and hopeful? We all are. Really, is that to be cited as a deplorable reflection upon those who are misleading them and cultivating false hopes?

Mr. Wegg: In some cases, yes and in some, no. At the university level, some of them who do attend—and I have had the opportunity to teach some of them on occasion—after their four years, realize they cannot make a career in music and they have to start again in another field. I find this rather saddening to see. While I never believe that time is wasted in education, no matter what the discipline, perhaps with better guidance earlier on, they could have come to this conclusion themselves.

I do not know how one documents an audition, but I spend a good deal of my time hearing the graduates from many programs auditioning for work with our orchestra and others and it is very sad to see from them the proof of the musical illiteracy when they are not familiar with the repertoire they purport to want to play for their living.

Madam Chairman: We have a brief supplementary from Mr. Faubert.

Mr. Faubert: It was just answered. I was going to ask him whether he had done auditions and he said yes.

Mr. Wegg: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: Mr. Wegg, would you be kind enough to tell us your background for your career?

Mr. Wegg: Certainly. As I alluded to earlier, I started playing the clarinet and then began private lessons on the clarinet when I arrived at grade 9 in high school. I took a music program in high school. Following that, I had some opportunities in the Ottawa Youth Orchestra. Having written some music, no one else wanted to conduct it, so they asked me to and this began my career, unhampered by any knowledge of the facts.

Finally, I went to the University of Ottawa where I majored in performance on clarinet and composition, and then my best field of study was commuting, literally, to Vancouver to study conducting with Kazuyoshi Akiyama, who at the time was music director of the Vancouver Symphony.

Following that, I did my master's in conducting at Pittsburgh and have since travelled the world attending master classes with various conductors whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am quite familiar with your work and I have always admired your desire to attach yourself very closely to the educational system in the community. I would like to ask you to say a little more about your points 2(c) and (d) under suggestions.

I wonder what forums are possible for people like you who have had, as you have just described, a different kind of training from most of the teachers in the schools of Ontario and what kind of communication channels or strategies there are for you with the faculties of education and also with the universities' preparation of secondary school students for their courses. Could you say a little bit about how you as a musician and the organizations that you no doubt belong to communicate with these educational bodies?

Mr. Wegg: Today is one example. What we are trying to do at every area is to set up a logical flow right from the beginning to the university, but the problem we encounter at every level is that once you have finished a certain segment, be it public school and then to university, the expectations of both seem to be different. I believe we see this in other subjects and other community colleges and so on, where one side says, "You didn't prepare them properly" and the other side says, "Well, you shouldn't be expecting it." It seems to me that we have fragmented too much.

Quite frankly, I am not quite aware of a mechanism to sit down with whomever and thrash out some of these things, what I view as life's work at this point, so that there is something comprehensive and not piecemeal within the various age groups and the various primary, secondary and post-secondary situations. I wish there was such a mechanism, and perhaps someone—

Mrs. O'Neill: So the members of your association, as such, are professional musicians. I certainly do not know the name of that, but you must belong to an association.

Mr. Wegg: Oh, yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: Many of these association do not in any way have a strategy of communicating with the educational community.

Mr. Wegg: I also am on the board of directors of the Ontario Federation of Symphony Orches-

tras, which itself is trying to grapple with the future of orchestras, which, I must tell you, is very much related to what I am saying here. As a quick aside, it seems to me that if people felt and knew what music can do as much as I know what it can do, there would never be an empty seat in the house and we would not have to see orchestras playing on top of mountains to generate public support.

Mrs. O'Neill: All I can say is that I hope you will continue to try to find channels to bring your message to those people who are educating, particularly at the faculties of education, because I think a breadth of experience within each community is what will bring this about.

Mr. Wegg: It is certainly my intention to continue.

Mr. Sterling: I appreciate your bringing forward this brief. I think the thrust of your brief holds very true. Regardless of what Mr. McGuinty says, I do not think it is to be taken as an attack on what exists. It really points to a significant hole in our education system. I am one who speaks from a point of view of not being gifted in the music area. I was kicked out of piano lessons, I was kicked out of violin lessons and I was kicked out of the choir.

Mr. Wegg: It is all right; Bach was thrown in prison.

Mrs. O'Neill: Norm, that is terrible.

Mr. Sterling: That is terrible, but I really do love music.

Mr. Reycraft: Even the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Sterling: No, I have not been kicked out of there yet, but almost a number of times.

Both in terms of my educational experience and the educational experience of my two teenage children, I really feel there was never even an option. You talk here about a nonoptional course.

Mr. Wegg: Yes.

Mr. Sterling: There is not even an option which they can fit into in terms of learning about music and enjoying it to a much greater degree.

Mr. Wegg: Exactly.

Mr. Sterling: Even if the ministry undertook to create an optional course, I think that would be a tremendous boost. I am talking about the secondary level at this time.

Mr. Wegg: Yes.

Mr. Sterling: I think your arguments are put forward in a very convincing manner. When I look back at the experience I have had with the education system, I only hope you will be able to rally somewhat of a lobbying effort or a focus as to what you are doing. I think that may be the failure of the music community more so than anything else.

Mr. Wegg: Yes, we are much to blame, as I have said. One must start somewhere.

Mr. Sterling: Perhaps what you should do is bring together in some form the suggestions for a curriculum. Governments are slow to react, but if an association of symphony orchestras says, "We will do it for you," then maybe that is what you should do.

Mr. Wegg: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Wegg. We do appreciate your coming. Just before we go, I would like to make a personal comment. Having two children who are not what you would call musically gifted and having attended many a concert when they were younger, I can assure you that parents may not be applauding their talents so much as applauding their joy of music, and that, too, is very important.

While I understand what you are saying about the fact that they may not have the basic pulse, rhythm and pitch exactly perfect, I think what is wonderful is the fact that they are expressing their feelings for music and even if they are tone-deaf, that perhaps contributes to their life.

Mr. Wegg: Certainly.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for your comments today.

Mr. Wegg: Thank you all.

The committee recessed at 12:40 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:06 p.m. in Delta B meeting room, Delta Ottawa Hotel, Ottawa.

Madam Chairman: I would like to open this afternoon's session of the select committee on education. For our two o'clock presentation today, we have the arts advisory committee of the Ottawa Board of Education. Would you come forward, please.

Mrs. McMullen: I assume this is where I sit.

Madam Chairman: Yes. Please be seated, and welcome to our committee. We have allocated half an hour for your presentation, and that includes question time for the members. If you could leave approximately half your time for questions, that would be wonderful. Please begin whenever you are ready, and start by introducing yourself for purposes of electronic Hansard.

ARTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, OTTAWA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. McMullen: My name is Deborah McMullen. I am a community member of the arts advisory committee of the Ottawa Board of Education. I am a writer in Ottawa, and that is the reason I am on this committee.

"The arts come from the truths of the human spirit, and therefore lead us back to the truth—to what we are and to what we might become. The arts, then, both in experiencing and participating in them, help us define and clarify our own and society's values. The arts are both the blocks and mortar of civilization." That quote is from a working paragraph of the arts advisory committee of the Ottawa Board of Education.

When we speak of the arts, we are referring to the disciplines of visual art, music, dance and movement, drama and the literary arts. In our schools, the arts are disciplines children learn to participate in, disciplines children learn to appreciate as audiences and tools for learning and expressing a variety of learning experiences. The arts are an integral part of learning, of social growth and of cultural identity. All children deserve the opportunity to develop their full potentials in the arts, not in order to become professional artists but to become fuller human beings. The Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of the arts in a balanced curriculum.

Learning in the arts begins before school entry. Children normally have ample opportunity to explore and develop their capacities in music, visual art, movement, drama and story telling in

their preschool years. However, once children begin grade school, their artistic development tends to receive less attention and many children come to believe that the arts are something that only some people do well, and they are not among them. Children need an environment that encourages their natural development in the arts and teachers who are able to introduce skills at the appropriate time. They need to experience creation, not only for the satisfaction that it brings but for the understanding and growth that follow. Extensive experiences permit children to develop their full potentials and create the atmosphere in which talent may emerge.

Children need to learn to be an audience for the arts. How a play is different from a movie, why we value a painting by Rembrandt, what is expressed in a *pas de deux*, what to listen for in a symphony and what a writer is trying tell us are all questions answered by education. Children who are exposed to a wide variety of the arts as an audience are better able to understand them and later to make judgements about them. The experience of art helps children to forge an identity with their society.

Beyond these two, the arts have a place as a tool of learning. The arts are forms of communication and, as such, are vital for young children, who have not yet developed full verbal and writing skills. By granting validity to nonverbal communication, teachers enhance children's involvement in the educational process. Throughout the school years, alternative forms of communication permit children wider scope for expression, more opportunity for demonstration of competence and a greater reliance on understanding as opposed to reporting.

The arts have a part to play in the learning of concepts. We know from Piaget that repetition of experience in a variety of modes facilitates learning and the transfer of that learning to new situations. We can take the example of fractions, where pencil-and-paper exercises often fail to result in complete learning but where physical manipulation of concrete objects leads to understanding of part and whole. That understanding is further deepened by the experience of playing a musical instrument, where fractional notes give a physical presence to a mathematical concept. Such overlaps between the arts and academic subjects are not rare when children benefit from a full arts program.

The arts are an integral part of the learning process. Children use the arts to explore ideas and concepts, to develop their perceptions, to expand their awareness, to make connections between various areas of knowledge and to develop their creativity.

Through the arts, children gain modes of self-expression, communication and understanding that are often far in advance of their verbal abilities. Drama and role-playing have the capacity to develop children's empathy with and understanding of people, places and events that are outside their own experience. Through the arts, children are able to make a personal connection with their learning and thus have ownership of their learning, with all the commitment and pride that ownership implies.

The arts are important to children's social growth. As well as offering opportunities for empathy, the arts permit children to experience different kinds of relationships. Some of the arts may alter the status hierarchy of a group. Many activities in music, dance and drama require co-operation for success. In visual art and creative writing, children share their insights and skills with one another and develop a basis for the discussion of process, which is as useful for their learning in academic subjects as it is in the arts.

The arts are also important to the cultural development of children. Through the arts, children can begin the integration of their personal, home, community and school lives, thus establishing a cultural context for themselves. Without the arts, this context could become a shifting, groundless nonculture based on television shows and commercial trends. With the arts, the children's lives can be woven into a cultural heritage that extends beyond one moment in time, giving them connections with their own past and future.

The arts are thus an aspect of education applicable to children at all levels and in all programs. Students in special education can gain in self-esteem, confidence and sense of accomplishment through the arts. Students at the secondary level continue to benefit from experience in the arts. Arts education is not an élitist program for talented students only, but a program designed to nurture the gifts of all students.

The Ministry of Education has outlined its expectations on the arts in schools in various documents circulating since 1975. The ministry recently released an action paper entitled *The Arts in Ontario Schools*, because its expectations were not being met.

The Ottawa Board of Education established an arts advisory committee to develop a policy on the arts to ensure that those goals would be carried out. Our discussions have focused on the issues presented here, as well as on teacher training, use of community resources, teacher-student resource centres, availability of resource teachers, curriculum development and financial commitment.

The arts are being encouraged because they are an important part of education. The commitment to the arts must continue.

The arts are not frills that threaten or displace academic learning. The arts enhance the learning atmosphere of a school. They permit the self-expression that drives all good writing. They kindle the joy and confidence that drive all good learning. They encourage the creativity that drives progress. They inspire the passion that drives life. To quote John Keats:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation. We will open up now for questions from members, and we will start with Mr. McGuinty.

Mr. McGuinty: I want to thank you most sincerely for your statement. During the past six weeks, I have listened to a lot of briefs in seven or eight different cities. I have never seen such a loaded, packed, charged, more meaningful compression of good ideas within the confines of four and a half pages, either in the past or the distant past as well. It is obviously very honed, very refined and very original.

You say, for example, they "have ownership of their learning, with all the commitment and pride that ownership implies." What a beautiful way of putting that. Ownership of their learning, identifying with it in a personal, meaningful way.

You speak of "establishing a cultural context for themselves." Very well stated.

I think there is one aspect of your missionary zeal that you may have not given perhaps proper emphasis to. It is one that I tried to elaborate on a few years ago, being involved in the establishment of the arts program at Canterbury High School. It is the idea that in our society, there are all kinds of pressures and tendencies to create certain sameness of mind, uniformity. The arts are the means whereby the individual dimension of the human experience can be expressed. I recall in Dr. Zhivago the young poet is told, "There's no room for poets in our new society," because poetry expresses the individual person

and does not suppress the individual within the state.

I think you have a beautiful statement here. My question is: Does our school program, as currently set up, recognize this? Does it provide the options or the means, the resources whereby dedicated people such as yourself and your colleagues can bring to bear and recognize on a practical order of programs and courses, and work toward the wonderful goal that you so well project here?

Mrs. McMullen: As it currently stands, those goals are not being fully implemented within the Ottawa Board of Education, but will be when the advisory committee completes its task of outlining a policy on the arts and submits it to the board. The commitment is there to provide the kind of arts education that will really fully educate the children.

Mr. McGuinty: Surely. I especially like your idea in emphasizing this is not for a few gifted in a rarefied atmosphere. This is something for all children, and they have a natural tendency, a natural appetite which should be catered to and developed. I thank you very much for a very fine statement.

Mrs. McMullen: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: We have Mr. Johnston, followed by Mrs. O'Neill.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: First, let me just apologize for not being in at the beginning of your statement; and second, to say that I have always disagreed with Keats on that particular matter. But I understand what he was trying to say in that, and I hope I understand what you are trying to say.

This morning, our last presenter was making an argument for why music should be used much more in the school system, should be seen as a mandatory subject in fact, and argued this in terms of music as language and history and other kinds of things. Specifically, not music as learning how to play an instrument. I did not share with him my experience as a trombonist scaring away the cows in my community as a child.

The question I have is within the mandate of where we are dealing at the moment as a committee. The effects of OSIS in that particular credit system at the high school level on the development of any of the arts is something I would like to hear a bit more about in practical terms from you.

There was concern raised in the past from other groups about the restriction on options, the

incapacity of people to be able to make choices like taking a music course or whatever because of the restrictions on options. I wonder what your council has been doing around that whole matter?

Mrs. McMullen: I have to admit that I really am not that knowledgeable about OSIS. But from discussions that we have had, I understand that children in the arts programs at high school are able to take quite a number of arts courses while continuing to fulfil their expectations within Ontario academic course. Is that correct?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Right.

Mrs. McMullen: So, I think that the possibilities are there. I think perhaps the schools have to become facilitators in enabling children to exercise those possibilities.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You are essentially saying that the problems start much earlier in terms of the way public school is organized around arts education; that once a child moves out of the day care-kindergarten milieu where the arts are very much, as you say, a major component of learning, after that it starts to be restrictive. Is that what you are saying? By the time you get to high school, presumably, fewer and fewer people are actually looking at it as an option except those that are deemed to be talented, etc.?

1420

Mrs. McMullen: This is true, yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: How do you see reorganizing the elementary panel specifically? At the moment there are all sorts of possibilities for incorporating the arts into education. Many teachers would, I would hope, look at that in terms of a holistic approach to various kinds of subjects.

Mrs. McMullen: That is approached in a number of ways, one of which is through teacher training—providing courses for teachers so that they themselves may have more experience in the arts. Many teachers are in the same situation as some of their young pupils of having few opportunities to experiment with the arts and develop a feeling of freedom in approaching them.

Beyond that, within staffing arrangements of particular schools, suggesting to principals that they pay attention to the arts backgrounds of the teachers they have in order that they can present a balanced curriculum to their students in using perhaps an arts specialist who is a regular classroom teacher, and taking some of her time to share her particular skills with the other students in her school.

The arts resource centre that is available for the elementary schools is something that the board is committed to maintaining and to giving teachers and students an opportunity to experience art under the direction of a qualified art instructor.

Also, there are a number of arts specialists who visit the schools and who are in the process of developing a new curriculum for one of the elementary levels where they do not currently have a good curriculum for the classroom teachers to work with. They recognize this as a problem area and are now going to ameliorate that by developing a new curriculum.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just one final thing. You and the arts advisory committee have been working here for some time. Have you been accumulating statistical information on things like the number of classes where those kinds of things are being done and the number of teachers who actually have training in the arts that are in the system here? Do you have that base data that can be shared?

Mrs. McMullen: I am afraid I do not have any right now, though we have been in the process of accumulating data about the arts programs that are available at individual schools, and are conducting a study of the arts program as it is currently available.

For instance, the music and drama program were looked at very carefully, I think, a year or two ago. It was recognized that the program had to be developed in such a way that the teachers could more easily teach the program and deliver it to the students.

There is a recognition that the programs, as they are currently conceived, often do not meet the needs of both teachers and students. We are in the process of using the music specialists and the arts and drama specialists to carefully examine the programs and put in place programs that can benefit everyone.

Mrs. O'Neill: I would like to echo the remarks of Mr. McGuinty. I feel very happy to have read this brief. I am happy about the quality of its presentation.

You seem to provide a spirit of optimism and hopefulness that however long it will take, it will happen. On folio 5 you say your discussions have focused on the issues of teacher training and availability of resources to teachers or resource teachers. I just wondered if you could say a little more about what you have discussed there and why you have this sense of hopefulness because it has not been the message we have been getting from some other presenters that the arts at the faculties of education are as solid as you seem to

indicate your interpretation is. Could you say a little bit about the teacher training and the availability of resource teachers?

Mrs. McMullen: Teacher training was something that we did discuss. Those of us who were not educators were rather surprised to find how little input boards and, it sounded like, the province had into the sorts of courses that were given to teacher trainees; but we understood that the board had options of expecting more from the teachers they hired than simply the teacher training credits, that the boards could decide to look in the teachers' records to see if they had had several arts credits and to emphasize the importance of that in their decisions regarding teacher hiring.

Additionally, there are investigations going on of the possibility of the board itself establishing the kinds of art courses that it would like to have its teachers participate in at the teacher training college—here it is the University of Ottawa—so they will receive credit through the university for the courses and the content of the courses will reflect the expectations of the board of education. I feel optimistic because I have a sense of the local board being able to control, to an extent, the kinds of teachers it is receiving and how it is training its own teachers to assist them in developing.

Mrs. O'Neill: You are suggesting that you have good reason to believe that the boards of education in this area have input into the faculty of education at the University of Ottawa regarding arts education. Is that what you are saying?

Mrs. McMullen: Perhaps I should clarify that. It is being investigated.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. Thank you. I just want to make sure we get clear messages that we can take back when we are making our decisions. I hope your investigation is successful.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank you, Mrs. McMullen, for bringing your brief forward to us today. I know you did not have a lot of time in which to prepare it, so we particularly appreciate your efforts. I think you have made a valuable contribution to our committee.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is the value of breaking the deadline.

Madam Chairman: Of which we are all aware.

Our next deputation will be from the Canterbury High School Parents' Advisory Committee. Could you come forward, please?

Mrs. Doern: I heard the original announcement, so if you do not want to go through it again, that is fine.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Could you just begin by identifying yourself and then please proceed?

CANTERBURY HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mrs. Doern: My name is Joan Doern. I am chairperson of the Canterbury High School Parents' Advisory Committee, a high school of the Ottawa Board of Education. We are the home of the performing arts program for the Ottawa Board of Education. We are a regional program within a composite high school.

You have my brief. A lot of the initial part of my brief I probably will not go through because Mrs. McMullen did it much better and covered it very well; so I will tend to hit the things that you seem to be asking particular questions about. Also, we are looking at overall curriculum for the arts from kindergarten to OAC, but also specialized arts education, which we are very interested in.

Our program is in its sixth year. We are delighted with what is happening to our students. That is the reason I am here and that is the reason we are active. The Ottawa Board of Education has given our students a magnificent opportunity. We see them excelling because they are working in an area they love. They have a chance to spend three hours out of every day doing something they want to do desperately. It carries on into all their academic courses and every other aspect of their lives.

What we see primarily is their sense of self-esteem building. I think that is the main goal of education, helping children to grow and become whole people. We see the education system working as it should and we are here to encourage you to further support the important role the arts can play in creating a well-rounded education system.

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A lot of arts students will not become professional performing artists or working artists, but they will be arts consumers, they will be arts administrators, they will be technicians and they will be involved in all sorts of peripheral areas. They will also be able to recognize the aesthetic qualities of the world around them.

One of the things we are concerned about is accessibility. I agree with the last presenter in that I think at the elementary panel accessibility to arts training across the province is very spotty. Historically, quality arts teaching has only been available to children whose parents could afford it.

One education goal is to allow students to reach their full potential. Enhanced programs for the intellectually gifted and the athletically gifted have always been available and we have put a lot of money into them. We have put a lot of money into sports facilities, which we have not been very forthcoming in doing for the arts. It is about time that was redressed because the arts touch everybody in society.

A good, solid, effective and creative arts curriculum should be in place from kindergarten to OAC. Instruction in the arts is often started in grade 9. By that time, students have often been turned off; they think it is wimpy. Students sometimes encounter their first arts course later on in their curriculum because OSIS says they have to have one arts course. Their career plans may be such that by that time that they have trouble fitting in something they are really very uncomfortable about doing because they have had no previous experience with it.

We have to start getting to these students when they are four, five and six and full of creativity and are not afraid to move their bodies and to draw and to sing and maybe, they think, look a little foolish, because they do not think they look a little foolish then. They do when they are 15.

The curriculum should be also structured so that every level of academic ability is approached. Everyone, regardless of his intellectual capacity, has great creative potential. Teaching the arts is one major way of allowing creativity to continue to be a major force.

Paul Torrance, who was a pioneer in researching how to measure and identify creativity, showed in several studies that between grade 4 and grade 5 creativity absolutely plummets. This is the stage in the education system where we say to kids: "I don't want you to paint the sky pink, I don't want the trees blue because that isn't the way it is. You have to be accurate." But we do not give them an option or an outlet to show that they can still be creative.

This is also a problem in high school, where we have tended to teach the arts only at the A level. We are the first people to recognize that A-level enriched arts courses are really important; that is our bread and butter and that is what we are doing, but as a whole, there is a great need for teaching all of the arts at the G level.

I am going to skip right over culture because I think you have had a brilliant presentation on culture.

I would like to say that the arts industries put \$19 billion into the Canadian economy last year. There are tremendous career opportunities in the

arts and in peripheral fields of the arts and we should be looking, in this time of Radwanski, co-op-ed and all these sorts of things, at the kinds of training and education that are available to our students in the arts and in the related fields.

Funding: You are going to be delighted here. I feel that arts cost money. They do not cost a lot of money, not as much usually as a big sports program. They have had a low priority. We need funds for equipment, quality teachers and facilities. Examples of the kinds of things where you might need extra funds are guest artists and allowing students to visit live performances. Children who are exposed to live performances turn into the arts consumers of the future.

Encouraging students to have arts courses at the different levels, as I said before, is very important. G level is process-oriented; A level is product-oriented and the methodology of teaching is very different. It is impossible to teach the two levels in one classroom if you are going to do a good job. Therefore, you need more teachers because you have more classes, and that costs boards money.

Special arts programs are a high-cost program. We know it and people from this area, like Mr. McGuinty and Mrs. O'Neill, know that. We need qualified teachers with higher qualifications than a normal music or arts teacher would have. We need very small class sizes. You cannot teach the violin to 40 gifted kids at once, not when they are 15 and 16 and have been taking violin since they were four. We need private tutors, guest artists, expensive equipment, because the kinds of instruments, say, in music, which is the area I am most familiar with, are very expensive. You have passed the kind of regular clarinet that you hand out to the kid in grade 7. The repair bills for this kind of equipment are very high. In our board and in most boards, that is taken out of the school budget. Most schools just cannot afford the cost of repairing them. Technical facilities of a higher standard than at regular schools are needed.

I would like to put a special pitch in for private tutors. In the past, in this kind of program for very gifted students, the emphasis has been on parents paying the whole shot for gifted children getting lessons. It has ruled out a tremendous number of students who could not access that. My child is going to have a private vocal tutor regardless of whether the board supplies it or not, but a lot of her friends are not. They are immediately behind, they do not have the same opportunities, their marks are not going to be as good, they are not going to get into the same post-secondary programs, and they are not going

to get scholarships because they have not had access. That is something we would like to see built into specialized programs if it could be.

We have been very fortunate. The Ottawa Board of Education has been magnificent in helping set up this program. They have given us tremendous financial resources, even though for our board we are in a time of very straitened circumstances. Things have changed all over the province, especially in Ottawa. We appreciate that. We recognize that most boards do not have the resources we have. If we look at areas like northern Ontario, they are probably going to have to go to the ministry for help. Further on, we will discuss the fact that we think regional programs such as ours are a very good way of dealing with some of the cost problems.

On teacher qualifications, which you were discussing before, the major difficulty in delivering strong arts curriculums in the elementary system is that teachers do not have the proper qualifications, especially at the elementary level. Meaningful components within post-secondary education systems have to be added. As the courses become more advanced, teachers need substantially more expertise in their areas. They need strong educational backgrounds as well because they can be the best artists in the world, but they have to be able to teach it. When you have these kinds of programs, they need people directing the programs who also have strong artistic and educational components and probably it would help a lot if they had some administrative background as well.

We would certainly encourage boards to do what our board is trying to do and have principals insist that a certain number of their staff have arts backgrounds when they are hiring, and that should be a stipulated criterion within the school.

To my love, the specialized arts programs, we think that gifted students in this province should have access to the special programs. They have great ability and only by being able to learn are they going to reach their full potential. In our school, we have seen what happens when you have a student body which is doing that and what happens to the teachers who are working with them, and the joy. My elder daughter came to school one day, not her school—she was out at college at this stage—and she said it was the first school she had ever been where everybody was smiling, including the teachers. And the education is good too.

The high-cost programs are out of the reach of many boards and so we get into the regional setup. The way this can be done is for boards to

share. They take responsibility for it and they share the extra high cost above the regular cost of education. The teachers, staff and administrators would be hired jointly by a panel from the board from within the boards if they had qualified people. If they did not have qualified people, for heaven's sake, go out of the boards to hire.

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Another reason we feel this model is very important, and we see this in Ottawa, is that you are dealing with a very small student base. There are very few students who have both the ability and the capacity to give up all their optional subjects to specialize. Our students have to take three credits a year in the area that they are accepted in after an audition process, which means they are taking a full academic load, plus three credits in the arts.

They are taking a nine-credit year which is very heavy. A lot of students have career plans that will not allow them to do that if they have to specialize with very heavy emphasis in some other area. Therefore, you need to draw from a very broad area. We feel that regional programs do that.

We do that. De-La-Salle High School also does that. It is an Ottawa Board of Education school with a French program. That program is the provincial program for the francophone segment of the province. I think they have some very special problems.

Arts programs are only one segment of the high school. Art students take a full OSIS load. You were asking about that. Our students can fit it in. It does work and they are having no trouble going on into every career under the sun. Our first graduating class had students going into criminology, out into the workforce, into medicine, into arts administration, arts journalism and several of the performing arts fields. You can structure a career within OSIS.

Students come in all shapes and sizes and all levels of ability. Within an arts school, you have to have the capacity to offer A level, G level and enriched courses. We offer A level and G level. We have specialized enrichment. We also offer extended French because we find in a city that has as much bilingual education as we do that 50 to 75 per cent of our students are coming out of—my mind has gone blank—immersion programs. All I could think of was enrichment.

They could not afford to give up the investment they had put into immersion. So they are now covering OSIS, a full arts load and taking three subjects in French or two subjects in French at the same time and will have five French high

school credits when they finish. These kids are working pretty hard.

There is something we are specifically interested in, as well, that has not been looked at across the province. We think that technical programs in the arts should be integrated into specialized arts programs at the same time. The arts students need that background.

The program needs the quality. We have a whole segment of the student population which would like to do those kinds of courses and would be turned on the way our students are turned on. Right now, they are doing a lot of drifting. There are a lot of G-level students who would really pick up on those types of course. There are seven jobs behind the stage for every job on stage.

Guidance departments also should be looked at specifically. Students going into the arts have a career ahead of them with very high stress levels, not regular paycheques, not nine-to-five jobs. We should be starting in grade 9 teaching children coping methods for the particular problems that this industry is going to lead them to.

There should also be a high interest by people in that department on careers and post-secondary programs in the arts. I would make a special plea, if anyone was interested, in someone finally doing a directory of all the arts programs, summer programs and specialized programs for children in the arts. It is impossible to find that material. It is a full-time job. I think we could hire somebody and he could work all year and would never find it.

In establishing guidelines for special programs like this or for any kind of special program, look at the school it is going into and look at the student body and the other programs and tailor it to them. Teachers coming into the school who are not academic teachers should be interested in the arts. They should be flexible and supportive because there are always conflicts with performances, exams and rehearsals. There is a high degree of co-operation needed.

However, there are tremendous rewards for teachers. The teachers at our school really show it because they talk continually about how much they like working with these kinds of kids. They do not ever want to go back to a regular school.

We have a hidden benefit we have just been discovering, that is, that in a program like this, the community is in the school all the time. They are there teaching; they are at performances; they are involved with various programs. The parents are in the school doing all sorts of extra things as well as all the regular things parents do. The

students are out all over the community, performing their own TV shows, teaching in community associations, teaching in schools.

We feel this is a model. We believe strongly, and the Ottawa board believes very strongly, in community accessibility to education. We have seen at first hand what is happening to our students. Every facet of their lives is being enhanced by what they are doing.

This is an opportunity we think should be available to all students and we hope you will support this type of programming if you have the opportunity. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mrs. Doern, for your very excellent presentation. When you were talking about the need for proper guidance, about the fact that the children in the arts are going into jobs with high stress levels, that they are not nine-to-five jobs and there is no security, I was thinking, "Gee, this sounds like politics." We could perhaps give them some tips on how to cope with that type of job.

Mrs. Doern: The same type of working hours too.

Mr. Jackson: It is a performing art.

Mrs. Doern: You should have come to our school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Our creativity is quite different.

Madam Chairman: Some would say quite limited. I am not referring to you, of course.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I noticed that.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Johnston, would you like to start off the questioning?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I was thinking of the way we develop our policies sometimes. I just have a number of questions about practical things. How many students are there in the high school now?

Mrs. Doern: There are approximately 700 students in the high school, half of whom are in the arts program.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Of the half who are in the arts program, how many are A-level and how many are G-level?

Mrs. Doern: I do not have those figures and every time I ask for them they say it is very difficult. I think the majority are A, but it is difficult to tell because some are taking A and some are taking G.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I presume there are no basic?

Mrs. Doern: No.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I wondered why you left out the notion in courses that maybe arts would be useful for basic.

Mrs. Doern: That was an oversight. Arts would be useful for basic. I think it might be very difficult to fit it into our curriculum because the base of students in the arts program is so small. We are dealing with such small classes and so few teachers that if we fragmented it yet again, we would have a problem. But across the curriculum, basic should be here and that was an oversight.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I did not particularly mean in a specialized school but in general. Where do the kids come from? One of the things said by the past presenter and alluded to by you is that the public schools really are not dealing with arts as well as one would like them to in terms of preparing kids. In Ottawa, just what is the real experience about feeder schools where a lot of the kids come from because there are programs there? Or are these kids all taking private tutoring somewhere else and find their way in because of that, rather than what is happening in the elementary panel?

Mrs. Doern: Basically, they are coming from all over. They are geographically coming from as far as Vermont this year, which is lovely.

The backgrounds they are coming from—again, because of career choices, sometimes the very good arts students come to us and sometimes they do not because they want to be in the gifted program at Lisgar Collegiate Institute. A proportion of them come with very strong backgrounds in the arts: violin since they were four years old. We also have string students who are coming into grade 9 with no background at all, which presents a real problem for the teacher, because he has the grade 9s together in a class and he has that level of difficulty.

There are specific areas where there are real problems and strings is one of them, because there are very few opportunities for students to get strings outside of private tutoring. We do have some schools that start strings in grade 7. But if you talk to John Gomez of the National Capital Youth Orchestra, he will tell you that is far too late and the opportunity has to be built in younger. A lot of vocal students have choir experience and that sort of thing. So it is a mixture of both.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It sounds as if it is not so much coming out of the elementary panel as from individual opportunities the kids have had.

Mrs. Doern: I would say half and half.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What is the socioeconomic makeup of the kids?

Mrs. Doern: Everything; absolutely everything.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Have you actually done a study of this to see what the numbers are?

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Mrs. Doern: No, but I know from talking to the guidance department about various problems that come up in any school with students where the social workers are involved, that our kids come from pretty well every background.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would be interested to see those stats. The other thing is that lately a lot of experimental work has been done with the arts and the mentally handicapped. I wonder if a specialized school like this has any kind of outreach into those kinds of programs.

Mrs. Doern: We do not have any outreach to the mentally handicapped. We do have the orthopaedic, severely physically disabled unit for our school. We have had it for only one year and it is working out beautifully, primarily because our students are different. They perceive themselves to be different—every one of them does—so they think everybody is different. If you happen to be in a wheelchair or whatever, it does not matter. The kids were assimilated the first day.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: How many kids are participating in that?

Mrs. Doern: About 12. Now, with integration and orthopaedic accessibility, kids do not have to come to special schools, which is the best way to go.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is good, thanks.

Mr. McGuinty: Again, thank you very much for your presentation. I am delighted to see that the two fine presentations from my favourite school board in the province complement each other. The first one outlined very clearly, in a very convincing way, the importance of arts education for everyone, not simply an élite group. You quite properly speak of it in terms of the school of the performing arts for a smaller group. These are not mutually exclusive, but complementary.

Comments have been made to the effect that in the kind of program we have at Canterbury—and I have very fond memories of the establishment of that program at the time, notwithstanding the doom and gloom critics who would cast water and rain upon the parade—the standard of

acceptance is too low for this kind of program; that we mislead young people by leading them to believe that they necessarily have careers as artists and then the kids discover this is not the case and it is too late, that they have not been properly prepared or their abilities have not been realistically assessed, and it really does not do much to develop the artistically gifted—it ghettoizes music and other art instruction.

These are charges that have been made. I recall these charges came up six years ago when those who were dedicated to setting up the school were charged with being snobs and élitists and trying to remove the kids and have them mingle in a rarefied atmosphere away from the unwashed and all this stuff, all of it based on the myth that all people are created equal in all ways.

Could you give a rundown of our experience with the art program in Canterbury in its six years? Do you think these charges have any truth in them?

Mrs. Doern: I have been involved with the school basically for the last five years and was in the school in its first year, so I have been around pretty well for the whole time. The aim at Canterbury is not to turn out performers; the aim at Canterbury is to enhance an ability and an interest that the student has. It is a performing arts program, and built into the curriculum are performance exams which the students have to take.

Other than that, they do not have to perform if they do not want to. If they want to perform, there are all sorts of opportunities, structured and unstructured, so that the students who want to go on and be performers can perform. I have a daughter who is going to go on to be a performer. I am a little concerned about the job market, but she is not.

Just to give you an example of what this program is doing, she was at an élite summer festival in Britain this summer for two weeks where she was six years younger than the next-youngest vocal student. Her training at Canterbury, including the private tutorials that have been involved with the school, which is the only training she has had, stood up very well. She had master classes with two of the best opera vocal coaches in Britain, and they told her to go on and to stay. There was no criticism whatsoever of the program. The program is doing what it is supposed to be doing.

With regard to the charge of ghettoizing, I do not believe it. If you look at the statistics, we have a very small student body. We are only taking a few students from any one school. It is

not enough to affect any other school's programs. If you look at the school my daughter would have gone to, it does not have a vocal program. She would not have had an option to get into; there was no other option for her. If she had wanted to do vocal music, it would have been totally private, other than choirs.

I think that the school is fulfilling its mandate. It is not perfect. There is a lot for us to do. That is why it is a challenge, but we are starting. We are only six years old. I think it takes 10 to 15 years to build a really good program.

Mr. McGuinty: Mrs. O'Neill was wondering whether you would have discipline problems at the school inasmuch as bad actors from other schools might tend to congregate there.

Mrs. O'Neill: I hope that is not taken as my query.

Mr. Reycraft: Hansard has the comment.

Mrs. Doern: We do have bad actors, though.

Madam Chairman: Just for your information, Mr. McGuinty does this all the time. He lays these terrible jokes on his fellow colleagues who happen, by accident of faith, to be sitting beside him.

Mr. McGuinty: On a point of order, did I tell a joke?

Madam Chairman: I can almost virtually assure you that Mrs. O'Neill did not say that.

Mrs. Doern: I would just like to say this makes me very homesick. I spend a lot of time in the boardroom at the Ottawa Board of Education and I have missed it.

Mr. Jackson: I appreciate very much your brief and the particular point of view you are expressing for the students you serve, but I have a couple of short, quick questions that perhaps you can help me with.

What is the situation with any ancillary fees for students or family members, recognizing the cost implications for programs? And how broadly based is the support level within the school?

Mrs. Doern: What ancillary fees? Do you mean for the students coming in from other boards or do you mean private tutors?

Mr. Jackson: No, within the school, setting the cost for everything from field trips to additional supplies to specific wardrobe requirements and instrumentation. Obviously we are talking about an extremely expensive program in all the arts. To what degree is that totally provided by the board and in what areas are there those additional costs?

Mrs. Doern: It is totally provided by the board. We are given a substantial amount of the budget over and above the school's budget, which is only for the arts program and which pays for private tutors, guest artists and supplies, the particular things that are specific for the arts.

However, we have been told, because we are now established and the board is facing some fairly drastic financial times, that that support will be continued, but nothing will be added. We have formed a fund-raising committee which is looking at raising funds for facilities that we feel we need because our students have specialized needs above what the normal board standards are. We have to take some of the responsibility ourselves, but we will raise those funds through means outside of going to the parents. That will not be an option. We will not look at that.

Mr. Jackson: So what you are saying is something similar to the manner in which we give a principal a certain fund for the athletic program. There is obviously not much, if any, athletic program going on here. They are very expensive.

Mrs. Doern: Yes.

Mr. Jackson: They discriminate as well, which is obvious, but that is another issue. But it would be less of a discriminatory allocation within the arts than it certainly is in terms of the athletic program. I am not sure how you structure your allocations down here. When I was a trustee at the Halton Board of Education, the principals had a tremendous amount of autonomy in terms of their global budgets.

Mrs. Doern: In the Ottawa board, the principals, as of last year, now bring their budget to the parents' advisory committee. We go through it with them so that they know what we think is important and we have a say in what they are doing with their budget.

Mr. Jackson: But the gross dollars are coming from the board.

Mrs. Doern: Yes. They do not have a lot of flexibility because of so many fixed costs. Times are a lot leaner. They have some flexibility.

Mr. Jackson: This is a public board?

Mrs. Doern: Yes.

Mr. Jackson: A public school. I am sorry.

What was the original reason for the art school six years ago? What was the genesis?

Mrs. Doern: The genesis of the program was to give enriched instruction in the arts to students who were specifically gifted in the arts, to make that kind of education available to every student

in a public board instead of just to those who could afford to go to private teachers.

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Mr. Jackson: You support the notion of specialization, then, if you can move out of the arts perspective, in terms of technologies and vocational schools?

Mrs. Doern: Yes, definitely, and I think those schools should be regional in areas like this too, and I do not know whether that has ever been addressed. But, again, small boards in northern Ontario and places like that cannot afford these programs and we should be piggybacking and doing more of that.

Mr. Jackson: We had difficulty because of busing. Conceptually, the whole program worked well until we got into busing of students and then everything broke down between timetables. It seemed a tragedy.

I had occasion to tour up in Sudbury a school which is well known to you, I am sure, in the centre of the city, which has an outstanding arts commitment. However, that development was born out of competition within separate school funding. They were in jeopardy of losing their school and their way of fighting back was to specialize and to collect as many highly specialized arts teachers as they could. It is a developing program, a tremendous theatre arts program, a dance program. They have the full range.

Mrs. Doern: Yes, so do we.

Mr. Jackson: I was fascinated by the tour because the main reason for its existence was not the one you advanced but rather to compete with a separate system. Would you talk to me, if you feel comfortable doing that, about whether that has any impact with your specific school? Also, what is the ratio of students? Did you experience a loss of students as a result of Bill 30?

Mrs. Doern: We are a four-board school supported by the Ottawa Roman Catholic School Board and the Carleton Roman Catholic School Board and the public boards, the Ottawa Board of Education and the Carleton Board of Education. We are waiting for the final agreement to be signed. I have been away all summer, so I do not know if the final signatures are on or when they will all start picking up part of the funding for the school. They will be doing this model of being involved in all of the hiring and administration. They will have people on the staff of the school.

Mr. Jackson: I find that fascinating.

Mrs. Doern: I have gone through all the documentation and I believe the reason for

setting up this school was strictly artistic integrity.

Mr. Jackson: I am delighted to hear that. It seems to be the opposite approach to what was occurring in Sudbury; not that there is anything wrong with what is going on in Sudbury. I was very favourably impressed. In terms of program amalgamation, consolidation or whatever you want to suggest, you are not having difficulty?

Mrs. Doern: No.

Mr. Jackson: That is fascinating.

Mrs. Doern: And the Catholic board supports us.

Mr. Jackson: I must visit.

Mrs. Doern: Oh, please come.

Mr. Jackson: I definitely will. Actually, I am one of those very fortunate Ontario students who was very involved with the arts. I took five years of art with a little-known art teacher named Robert Bateman. I had him for five years.

Mrs. Doern: Oh, poor baby.

Mr. McGuinty: What is he doing now?

Mr. Jackson: He is in Vancouver.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Is he still playing piano?

Mr. Jackson: He is still playing piano.

Mrs. Doern: Does he have a nine-to-five job? That is what I need to know.

Mr. Jackson: No, he does not.

Mr. Mahoney: Does he need one?

Mr. Jackson: The toughest part of his life is flying down to Venice, Florida and doing two full days of nothing but signing. It is a fascinating story, just the way he has to soak his hand from all the cramping he gets from signing his prints.

Mr. Mahoney: Does the same thing happen to you?

Mr. Jackson: No. In fairness, regarding your point about the quality of teachers, he took one year as a consultant. The natural tendency of the politics of school boards was to make him a consultant co-ordinator. After being on the job two weeks, he was so miserable, but they would not let him go back to the classroom. Finally, he had to threaten to resign before they put him back in the classroom where he wanted to be. It is quite a fascinating study on how some of our best arts teachers are removed from the classroom when, in fact, that is where they really want to be.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank you, Mrs. Doern, as well as the Canterbury parents' advisory committee. I wish you well in your future endeavours.

Mrs. Doern: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Our next presentation will be by the Carleton unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. Would the OECTA representatives please come forward?

Good afternoon, and welcome to our committee. We are glad to have you with us as we continue our pursuit of looking at OSIS and streaming and semestering and grade promotion and many aspects of the organizational process in Ontario education. We have allocated half an hour for your presentation, including the question time for the members, so we hope you will allow time at the end so that all those members who are just chomping at the bit to ask you questions will have an opportunity. Please begin whenever you are ready and start by introducing yourself for purposes of electronic Hansard.

**ONTARIO ENGLISH CATHOLIC
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION,
CARLETON UNIT**

Ms. McVean: Thank you very much for the opportunity to meet with you today. My name is Kathryn McVean and I am the president of the Carleton unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. With me this afternoon is Donna Marie Kennedy, who is the first vice-president of our unit. Our unit in Carleton represents 1,100 teachers in the Carleton elementary and secondary schools in both Carleton and Prescott-Russell counties, including the cities of Gloucester and Nepean.

The focus of our presentation today will be from the point of view of Catholic teachers in a publicly funded system. Specifically, we wish to address three issues: the financing of education, the granting of religious education credits and teacher qualifications to teach religious education. The ministry, in its invitation to the Ontario public to appear before the select committee, suggested areas of discussion to include streaming and OSIS. Throughout our presentation this afternoon we will be indirectly touching on these areas as well.

The announcement by the Honourable William Davis on June 12, 1984, of the completion of the Catholic school system to the end of grade 12 OAC as a publicly funded system was applauded by the entire Catholic community. The support received for this initiative from all three political parties in the province was welcomed. However, the funding of Catholic schools is still not equal.

One area of concern which is shared by teachers, trustees and parents of students alike in separate schools is the unbalanced access to commercial and industrial taxes. We have found common ground in applauding the government's decision to extend full government funding of secondary education for Catholic schools, yet we are left with the feeling that we have been given second-rate access to the top of a glass mountain. The public schools have access to an elevator while we have been equipped with ropes and cleats for our shoes.

Many separate school boards are currently limited in their ability to generate moneys to cover over-ceiling expenditures. This happens because of the dramatic differences in assessment wealth of school boards. A financial profile of the four school boards in the Ottawa-Carleton region, conducted by the Lionel Feldman Consulting firm in 1986, pointed out the inequity of the taxation system. In round figures, the total number of assessment dollars per elementary pupil in the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board was \$7,500, compared to \$25,100 and \$55,400 with the Carleton Board of Education and the Ottawa Board of Education respectively. Based on data received from the Carleton Roman Catholic school board, its assessment wealth in 1987 was \$165 million, compared with the Carleton Board of Education at a figure of \$631 million.

Translated into spending dollars, every mill of assessment levied by the Carleton Board of Education provides it with \$466,000 more than is received by the Carleton Roman Catholic school board to cover over-ceiling costs. When assessment wealth is weighted and compared with that of the Ottawa Board of Education, the differential is still greater.

The inequity is far more astounding when one looks at only the commercial and industrial assessment. The assessment dollars per elementary pupil directed to the Carleton Board of Education are \$3,600 and \$23,400 to the Ottawa Board of Education. This compares with a mere \$472 to the Carleton separate school board. Of the total industrial and commercial assessment in the Ottawa-Carleton region, only two per cent was directed to the Carleton separate board. Yet the expectations from this educational system and other assessment-poor boards, by the students, the parents, the community and the ministry, are the same.

This problem is not unique to Carleton. Ian Macdonald, in his report on the financing of elementary and secondary education in 1985,

stated with respect to commercial and industrial assessment, "Significantly, Roman Catholic separate school boards have the least wealth per pupil in this regard, averaging provincially \$13,663 per pupil, compared with \$103,354 per pupil in the elementary panels of boards of education."

Nor is it unique to Catholic boards. Great disparities also exist among public boards of education. In our estimation, assessment-rich and assessment-poor boards can no longer be justified in a system which is publicly funded and legitimately in need of the same programs.

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The same levels of services must be provided for all students in both public and separate systems. The reality is that the same level of funding is required to do so. The funding situation is a major consideration when considering OSIS in general and streaming in particular. While research is heavily weighted in support of heterogeneous ability groupings, certain conditions must be precursors of movement in this direction.

First, teacher education is essential. The range of abilities and the level of skill base of the students becomes more pronounced as they become older. Particularly for intermediate and senior teachers, in-servicing would be critical to ensure that professionals working with the heterogeneous groupings have the leadership skills and the teaching expertise to deal with each student's unique and varied needs, to develop alternative teaching styles, to provide continuous evaluation on an individual basis and to make full use of new learning materials and support staff.

Second, the pupil-teacher ratio would have to be much lower in order to allow the classroom teacher time to provide for and evaluate the basis of each student's needs and learning styles. Major reports have recommended shared revenues from commercial and industrial assessment in the past. To this date, action has not been taken. It is our view that access in some manner is overdue and justifiable and must be accepted as such before any solution will be found.

Therefore, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Carleton Unit, requests that the ministry take immediate steps to provide a more equitable distribution of the resources available from commercial and industrial assessment so that all students in publicly funded schools share equally in public moneys.

The second thing we wanted to address this afternoon was the question of religious education credits. Ontario now has two publicly funded

education systems. The separate school system distinguishes itself, though, with the Roman Catholic philosophy that permeates the entire system. While the development of the Catholic lifestyle in our students is a continual daily experience throughout the school, the teaching of religious education serves to support and strengthen that atmosphere. Therefore, it is a very important aspect of the student life in a Catholic secondary school.

At present, the Ministry of Education recognizes the courses offered in grade 9 and grade 10 for credit as religious education. We, as Catholic educators, strongly support the granting of up to four credits in religious education at the secondary level.

One of the curriculum priorities outlined in OSIS is for the school to, "develop its own courses of study...to meet the needs, interests and the ability of the students in its community." Clearly, a definite need of the separate school community is the development of the religious dimension of the student's life. A lengthy and ongoing process, Catholic educators believe that this process should be an integral part of each year in the student's school program.

The ministry in its 13 general goals of education emphasizes many of the same values and attitudes that are part and parcel of the religious education program: self-worth, the role of the individual and the family in society, personal responsibility to and respect for the society and those who make up that society, and the development of personal, ethical and religious values.

Certainly the teaching of religion in the Catholic schools falls very much in line with the intent of these goals. The objectives of the religious education programs not only incorporate these goals, but serve to enhance them. We further believe that the secondary school student has the right to receive credit for study in religious education.

Therefore, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Carleton Unit, recommends that students in Catholic secondary schools be able to acquire up to four credits in religious education to be recognized for credit towards the Ontario secondary school diploma.

The third area we wish to address this afternoon is with respect to teacher qualifications. Students presently attending the separate schools are able to obtain two credits in religious education. It is the responsibility of the separate school boards to establish and maintain all

religious education programs which are offered for credit.

School boards have taken on that responsibility and have developed extensive religious education programs for use in the elementary and secondary schools. This has been done in co-operation with representatives of the other Catholic groups in Ontario. However, the concern we have as educators rests with the qualifications of those teachers who are teaching the religious education programs.

Although it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to provide for the best qualifications for teachers in either of the two publicly funded systems, there is no defined set of qualifications for teachers in this particular discipline, a key subject in our Catholic schools.

The Ministry of Education has co-operated with the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association in offering the three-part religious education additional qualifications courses and many teachers have availed themselves of this program. These courses have presented teachers with extensive opportunities to develop their own personal faith life and with strategies for the development of that faith life in their students.

With the completion of the Catholic school system, there is concern that teachers at the intermediate and senior divisions are unable to become as well qualified to teach in the area of religious education as in other subject areas. Just as the computers-in-education courses are not sufficient preparation for the teaching of computer studies courses at the intermediate and senior levels, neither do we feel the religious education courses offered as additional qualifications are adequate preparation for the teaching of religious education courses at the credit level.

Regulation 269 identifies those areas in which teachers attending the faculties of education can concentrate for certification at the intermediate and senior divisions. Religious education is not included in this list and is therefore not an area where training teachers may concentrate. Teachers in training or teachers extending their basic qualifications are unable to do so in this area.

The ramifications of this are great. If the student teachers major in religious studies at the undergraduate level, it may be very difficult to acquire admission to the education faculty with the necessary credits for their area of specialization. If indeed the students have met the minimum requirements for admission to the education program, they may not have as great a

chance of acceptance because of the limited scope of their undergraduate program. In comparison to other applicants, their background in the areas of concentration they have chosen for teacher certification may be very weak.

The ministry has been very sensitive to the needs of certain groups and their desire to provide educational programs which enhance special interests, including those in French and other modern languages and native studies. We believe the ministry will understand the importance of the recommendation we are making at this time.

We are recommending that an amendment be made to regulation 269, Ontario teachers' qualifications, schedule A, by the addition of religious education, and we seek the support of the select committee in this request.

I thank you for this opportunity. Both Ms. Kennedy and I would welcome any questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We will start with Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have a couple of basic questions of information. I presume, since completion, there has been a fair change in the number of students taking basic-level courses in your jurisdiction at this point. Do you have any idea what the change has been? It seems to have been the case across most of the Catholic system.

Ms. McVean: There has been some increase. I cannot give you exact statistics on that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The board is coming. It might be easier to ask them.

Ms. McVean: They might be able to answer, yes. There certainly has been some increase but not a tremendously significant one.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do I understand from your brief that you support the position of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, which has been given to the committee already, of opposing streaming, if I can put it that way? That might be a fair depiction of what was said to us the other day.

Ms. McVean: Yes. The research supports that; it is heavily weighted in that direction. The only difficulty we see in supporting that, which I think was also stressed very definitely during the OECTA presentation, was the preparation that has to go into implementing that type of thing, specifically teacher education and the pupil-teacher ratio.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What exactly is the policy at the moment of the Catholic boards around the integration of the disabled? Do you

have most of the disabled mainstreamed or do you have a lot of withdrawal classes?

Ms. McVean: At the secondary level, they are all mainstreamed. At the elementary level, up to grade 8, we have both types of programs operating in our schools. As well, we have the developmentally handicapped being integrated into most of our individual schools rather than being segregated at a separate site.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What is available in terms of tech courses within the Catholic system at the moment?

Ms. McVean: As the additions are being built to our schools in Carleton, there is a heavy emphasis being put on that area. It is growing, definitely.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Again, I will try to get those figures from the board when it comes.

I will move from questions of streaming, which those were all sort of based on, to the question of OSIS and the implications, if I might ask you this: what might a student be coming out of the Catholic system with in terms of the number of credits in various other subjects if we move to four credits rather than two credits for religious ed?

Just to set the stage a bit, we have heard from some deputants already, outside of this issue, that there is a real limitation on students in terms of what kind of options are available to them. A number of people are actually recommending in their briefs that we reduce the number of optional courses in grades 9 and 10 as a change from OSIS and actually have fewer of them to choose.

What I am raising is, if we move from two to four in terms of religious ed, what effect is that going to have on students choosing the things we were talking about this morning, arts, tech courses, French—which is very important in this kind of area—computers and other kinds of things? Have you looked at that? I have never heard back from the Catholic community on the way it sees this fitting out in terms of constraints that could be put on students in terms of the breadth of their education coming out of the secondary level.

Ms. McVean: The students under OSIS have 14 optional credits anyway. Looking at courses such as tech and computers and so forth, they can begin to take some of those courses and still fit within the compulsory credits. You do have to have a tech credit, a French credit and those types of things. So some of those credits would fall under the compulsory as well.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I guess what I am saying is you have been moving from 14 to 10, essentially. Right?

Ms. McVean: We are not saying they would be compulsory. We are saying the students would be able to acquire credits in each of the years in high school. In the Catholic schools, we would be encouraging the students to do that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What I am asking—the thing that is always said to us when somebody says the curriculum is too jammed, etc.—is what would you cut if most students got encouraged to take those two extra courses. Where do you see the flexibility in terms of people still maintaining a fairly broad education but having the religious education credits increased to four?

Ms. McVean: I think at the moment in most schools in Ontario, and certainly in our own schools in Carleton, the students are taking what is equivalent to religious education courses but they do not have the right to call them that. So they are fitting them into their timetable and they are still getting a fairly broad education. They are meeting the requirements of OSIS, the 16 required courses, and working in additional options as well. But we would like the legitimacy of them being called religious education courses.

Madam Chairman: Apparently Mr. Reycraft has a supplementary on that point.

Mr. Reycraft: With the courses you are talking about being fitted into their timetable, are they being taught on a credit basis or taken on a noncredit basis?

Ms. McVean: They are being taught on a credit basis and falling under a sociology and a physical education of grades 11 and 12.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I guess I am going to get into the semantics of all this, pedantics, perhaps. If they are already taking it and they are taking them as sociology or as some other history course or whatever it might be—I am not sure now what the point is I am pushing so hard for. To be called religious education courses when within your own system you are already managing to zero in—

Ms. McVean: We would like them to be legitimately called what they are is what we are saying. That is skirting the issue.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: On the other side of things you are saying they can get their well-rounded education, that is they can still do that, because they are doing it at the moment—All I have to do really is say I am going to stop my sentence and applause breaks out immediately, usually from other committee members.

Madam Chairman: Are we to take that as a positive sign?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Exactly. You can break into applause now.

Madam Chairman: Thank you Mr. Johnston. We will go on to Mrs. O'Neill, Mr. Reycraft and Mr. McGuinty.

Mrs. O'Neill: It is nice to see you both again. I would like to ask a rather personal question of you, Ms. Kennedy. Are you still working with the developmentally handicapped in religious education?

Ms. Kennedy: No. I have gone back to the classroom as a special education teacher.

Mrs. O'Neill: Is that program, however, which I think was rather a pioneer program in this area, still in existence?

Ms. Kennedy: Yes, it is in the schools which are for the trainable mentally retarded in the public school system. But now the four-board agreement is going on, so that position is still held by one of our teachers.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you for bringing me up to date.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Which four-board agreement is that?

Mrs. O'Neill: Excuse me, Mr. Johnston. What we had was a four-board agreement regarding the training of the developmentally handicapped in this area, I guess somewhat like the arts program is going to now be. In conjunction with that, the students could be placed in any school no matter what their religious affiliation. We had an arrangement whereby there was an itinerant teacher provided by the separate school boards to go into the public school boards where there were students of the Catholic denomination. It was a kind of exciting thing and one of our presenters here today was the first teacher involved.

Regulation 269: We have heard this from two or three presenters. You are hoping that we as a committee will support it. What is being done in a formal way by way of federation, faculty of education representations— How are you dealing with this question?

Ms. McVean: We locally have not been directly involved in any steps up to this point in trying to have some changes made in that area, so I cannot comment any further than that.

Mrs. O'Neill: If you would like this committee's support, and it seems like something which certainly could become a recommendation if it is going to be helpful for the preparation of teachers

for the second publicly funded system in this province, I really would hope that you would have your executive send us, in very short form, exactly what the steps are and where you are with this process, because it will be very hard for us to take action on it until we know more about it.

Ms. McVean: Okay, we can provide you with that.

Madam Chairman: Technically, we are almost out of time but we do have two more questioners. Mr. Reycraft and Mr. McGuinty, if you could keep the questions rather brief.

Mr. Reycraft: I will. A couple of questions. To pick up on what Mrs. O'Neill was asking about, I am not clear on why the existing religious education certification courses which are offered through the ministry are not satisfactory.

Ms. McVean: Those cover a range from kindergarten to Ontario academic course, really. They fall more in line with the type of course like computers in education, as I mentioned, or junior science education or that type of thing, whereas once you get into the intermediate and senior levels, teachers who specialize in those areas and are qualified to teach at the intermediate and senior level qualify in a certain subject discipline. It may be in biology, it may be in data processing, that type of thing.

We have a number of teachers, of course, in our secondary schools who are teaching religious education, yet their qualifications on their certificates say they have become qualified in English or they have become qualified in math. They are not able to take that basic qualification in religious education.

It has two effects: first, on their teaching training or if they have gone back to upgrade their basic qualifications they have not been able to concentrate in that area; and second, particularly for the impact on new teachers coming into the system, it is very difficult for them to take their undergraduate degree in religious studies and at the same time meet the requirements to enter the faculty of education in some other discipline and still have a fairly well-rounded education.

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Ms. Kennedy: If I might add to that: in schedule F, in order to become a department head you have to be an honours specialist. You cannot get it in religious studies; you have to get it in another discipline and then become head of the religious ed department of the school. There is no continuity there.

Mr. Reycraft: It seems to me that one way around the first problem you described might be to just extend the course to offer a fourth part that focused on teaching religious education at the senior level. I realize, though, that would not address the latter problem you described.

On the issue of the four credits, the Ministry of Education has been wrestling for some time now with whether religious education could be offered in the public system on a credit basis. Obviously, that is proving to be a monumental challenge because its response has been awaited for several years now. But it seems to me that we already have a basic inequity between the two systems in that some students in this province can get religious education credits that count towards their 30 necessary credits for the Ontario secondary school diploma, but others, like my kids who attend a public system, are not able to get those credits. I believe that extending the number from two to four would just exacerbate that problem. Do you not agree that there would be an unfairness if that change occurred before we resolved the matter within the public system?

Ms. McVean: We are making our recommendation for the four in the Catholic school system. We are not in any way restricting the same four in the public system. We are not advocating that in any way.

Mr. Reycraft: You are not suggesting either, though, that you would be offering multid denominational courses, I suspect, in the Catholic system.

Ms. McVean: No, we are not.

Mr. Reycraft: That is the problem the public system has to deal with.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They do offer it.

Mr. Reycraft: It is world religion?

Ms. McVean: Actually, yes, grade 11 is a world religion course, but the focus is on the Catholic faith.

Mr. Reycraft: You do not think that would be a serious inequity if that situation was allowed to develop?

Ms. Kennedy: Not at all.

Ms. McVean: Not at all.

Mr. McGuinty: I will keep my question short, although my prologue not necessarily so, and I know you would never cut off a man in his home town.

Madam Chairman: I am sorry; it was your preamble we asked to be short so their answer could be long.

Mr. McGuinty: All right. If I might respectfully take issue with an opening remark you made, you state that the Judeo-Christian ethic permeates the communal life of the school, you believe the teaching of religion is fundamental and you say, "In essence, religious instruction is our *raison d'être*."

I respectfully suggest that statement is not appropriate nor is it correct. Religious instruction is more properly the function of the home and the church and education is the function of the school. There is an old pedagogical principle and a theological truth which maintains that the teaching of religion may have little, if anything, to do with religious instruction and education. As you properly say, the religion in the Catholic school permeates organically all subject matter.

Having said that, I do agree certainly that you have a problem here, a real problem and a valid one. You speak, for example, about the qualifications of teachers who are teaching religious education in the programs. Has your association defined those qualifications? There is no defined set of qualifications. I would not wait for any expertise from the ministry in this regard. I think I would take the initiative if I were you people.

Also, I think what you have here with reference to regulation 269 is a logical follow-up to Bill 30. Having recognized the rights in law of the Catholic schools to exist and develop, I think likewise we have an obligation to respect those particular issues or needs in this whole business of teacher qualification. But I would ask you, has your association taken the initiative to define those qualifications, to suggest particular credit courses that could be taken, pedagogical techniques that should be used?

The old days are long gone by when those of us who went to Catholic schools were taught religion by those who could not teach anything else. They somehow fell into the cracks. That was too often the case. To teach religion in the school now in a dynamic, dramatic, convincing and impressive way, to satisfy the needs and the appetites of young people is a formidable task. It requires a command of pedagogical techniques and a gut-feeling conviction of the truths that are being imparted. Have you gone on to define those qualifications and suggest what the subject matter should be?

Ms. McVean: What we are saying is that part of the teacher training process would deal with that. Whereas teachers now go into the faculty of education and their teacher training is in, let's say, English, their practical experience is in English, the pedagogy relates to that subject and

so forth, what we are saying is that we would like that to be done with respect to religious education.

Mr. McGuinty: Exactly. Have you suggested how it should be done?

Ms. McVean: At the faculty of education, but right now it cannot be done because teachers cannot receive a qualification in religious education, so it has to be done through some other route to become qualified to teach. Then they might go into the schools and, in fact, teach in religious education, but right now they do not have a choice to follow that direction.

Mr. McGuinty: I appreciate that. You have pinpointed a real problem. I really thank you for it. Thank you for the time, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: It is always a pleasure to hear you, Mr. McGuinty.

Mr. Mahoney: Would you like a second opinion on that?

Madam Chairman: No, we would not like a second opinion. Thank you very much for contributing to our committee.

I would also like to thank the Carleton unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association for coming before us today.

Ms. McVean: Thanks very much for the opportunity.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is caucus solidarity. There is total solidarity here, I want you to know.

Madam Chairman: If there is not, you are in deep trouble.

Our next presentation will be by the Local Apprenticeship Committee, Motive Power Trades, Mr. Dale and Mr. Lamarche. Would you come forward?

Welcome to our committee, gentlemen. We appreciate your coming, particularly in the light of the fact that you are going to shed some light on an area we have not heard too much about to date. We have allocated half an hour for your presentation, which includes time for questions from the members. If you could leave sufficient time so that all these stimulating questions may be asked, we would very much appreciate it. Please begin whenever you are ready, first of all, by introducing yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

LOCAL APPRENTICESHIP COMMITTEE,
MOTIVE POWER TRADES,
CARLETON BRANCH

Mr. Dale: My name is Terry Dale. I am the chairman of the Local Apprenticeship Commit-

tee. I am also an employer in the motor vehicle repair trade.

Mr. Lamarche: My name is Marc Lamarche. I am also a member of the Local Apprenticeship Committee, and I am employed by a local dealership as an automotive technician. I am also involved in teaching courses at Algonquin College and am a substitute teacher for the Ottawa Board of Education in automotive technology.

Mrs. O'Neill: Marc is also a constituent of Ottawa-Rideau.

Interjections.

Mrs. O'Neill: Mr. Mahoney often identifies his constituents, so I decided I was going to do it.

Interjection: Let's just declare a conflict of interest.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do you have a political affiliation you would like to toss about?

Mr. Dale: No, Ottawa-Rideau is a very nice constituency. I wish I lived there myself.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you.

Mr. McGuinty: There are plenty of empty houses in Ottawa South.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is where he lives.

Madam Chairman: As you notice, the members are getting somewhat punchy. I will try to control them, but I cannot make promises.

Mr. Dale: I understand.

First of all, I will just do a quick introduction of ourselves and the committee we represent just so we have some foundation for credibility, I hope.

The Local Apprenticeship Committee—it is a fairly long title—Motive Power Trades, refers to the motor vehicle repair trades, both truck and coach and motor vehicle repairs and the motorcycle trades and so on.

The membership consists of representatives of the industry. It really is an industry- or employer-driven type of committee; it responds to the needs of the industry out there today.

It consists of members who are garage owners, dealership management, technicians—as we like to refer to the people who work in this industry now as opposed to the old terminology of mechanics—secondary school automotive teachers, community college teachers, community college management, representation from the Ottawa-Carleton Industrial Training Council and a Ministry of Skills Development counsellor as well. So we have representation in virtually all of the areas of interest to a typical person coming through his apprenticeship and into the trade and

possibly on into the ownership. We touch pretty well all the bases.

The objectives of this committee overall are to form a working relationship and maintain communications between all the representatives. We work as a selection committee for some of the various apprenticeship programs such as the MAP-40, or motor vehicle apprenticeship program concept, which has been very, very popular in this area. It has been used to some degree of success in other areas of the province, however, I think the success rate of this area is a credit to the local apprenticeship committee, its enthusiasm and its desire to make it work and promote and introduce people to the trade.

It acts as a skill upgrading committee and has been very active in the last two to three years, taking advantage of various funds that have been made available through the job training strategies and so on and developing and implementing upgrading courses in the high-tech areas that the technicians are coming into now, the on-board computer technology that we are seeing in all areas of motor vehicle repair. It has been very strong in those, including areas that are branches of that, such as auto parts clerk upgrading courses, recognizing that the technician interfaces with the guy behind the counter in the parts department. We are very concerned and try to create improvements in the whole sphere.

We also recognize the graduates of the apprenticeship program by organizing and giving a banquet at the end of each of the school training sessions.

We have recognized—and Marc Lamarche will make a presentation and develop it a little bit more than has been spelled out in our brief—an area which we have been noticing and expressing a concern about as recently as the last three or four years, the area of the high-tech componentry that is coming out on cars now. We are finding, first of all, a need to immediately and quickly upgrade the skills of the existing technicians in the trade.

Second, we are finding a very desperate shortage of apprentices coming into the trade, both in numbers and in quality in those numbers. We are looking for a breed of person who really is not just a mechanic who is good with his hands and can swing a wrench. The old saying is, "If he can't do anything else, let him be a mechanic;" we are really looking at the phrase now as, "If he can't be a mechanic, let him do something else."

We need a diagnostician, a technician, somebody who has got the brain capacity to diagnose, think, read, interpret and deal with this high-tech

computer technology. Where we are finding the crisis, and what is really the basis of this brief that we are presenting, is that they are coming out of the high school system sadly lacking in the skills that would make them good candidates for the motor vehicle repair trade. It is an exciting trade, it is an interesting trade and it is a very viable trade for somebody who is interested in looking at it as an alternative during the high school process.

I am going to turn it over to Mr. Lamarche, and he is going to expand on that a little bit.

Mr. Lamarche: This is a topic that has come up for discussion many times at our local apprenticeship committee meetings. We are pleased that we have had the opportunity to send in a brief and to appear before you today. The one area that is very important is the upgrading of the technical teachers—there seems to be a problem in that area—and also providing them with proper recognition for any courses and up-to-date programs they may have completed. Without having up-to-date teachers, your training and your courses do not maintain student interest. If the students are working on technology that is 15 or 20 years behind the times, then definitely, they are not going to be interested in the programs.

It is also essential that the automotive workshops in the high schools be properly equipped with current test equipment, late-model test automobiles and components but, most of all, up-to-date teachers. We realize that it is a multijurisdictional issue as far as the Ministry of Education, in co-operation with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities as well as the Ministry of Skills Development, is concerned, to evaluate the situation and make necessary changes in legislation, as well as changes to the current programs in order to provide the industry, which is in a skills-shortage situation once again, with a good supply of potential apprentices. Whether or not these students in the high schools pursue an automotive career is no excuse to provide them with an inadequate tech course.

We have pointed out three views in this brief, and I would like to go over them very briefly. Many students are under the impression that automotive studies in high school is an easy credit and that academically weak students are directed to those courses. They are also under the impression that it is a rough and dirty trade and that we are still a bunch of grease monkeys out there. Believe me, that is not true. In fact, due to recent changes in the industry and technology, we require people—men and women, both French and English—to train, using many scientific

principles. It is not just a matter of going out there and dismantling an engine, for example, and putting it back together. Anybody can do that. To do it properly is a different thing. These days, satisfying your customers is one of the highest priorities. We cannot do it without properly trained people, and it all starts in the high schools.

Trade teachers in the high schools are falling further and further behind in the technology, and it tends to discourage students from taking automotive courses. This is due mainly to the fact that automotive teachers do not receive any sort of recognition, other than personal satisfaction, for any trade courses or programs offered which they complete which may upgrade their skills. They are better off taking academic courses at the university in order to receive any sort of recognition. We have no objections against academic courses, but they do not do much to upgrade a technical teacher.

High school automotive trade shops are another area which is in need of help. Many of these shops are poorly equipped, with outdated test equipment, outdated test components and outdated automobiles. This does not do much for creating an interest in the automotive courses for the students.

As a committee, we recommend that, first of all, students, both male and female, have to be re-educated about the trade of automotive technician, about its challenges, rewards and career opportunities. This is an area which the Ministry of Skills Development and the Ministry of Education, through its teachers and guidance counsellors, will have to tackle.

Automotive teachers will have to be given the opportunity to participate in any upgrading courses and programs and receive the proper recognition for their time and efforts. These courses and programs will have to be recognized by the ministry in question. This is an area in which the Ministry of Education, in co-operation with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and with the help of industrial training councils, will have to take a leading role to set acceptable guidelines.

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Trade shops will have to be looked at to resolve the problem of lack of current test equipment, test automobiles and test components. This is an area which the industry and the ministry could work hand in hand to resolve. There are many groups which are available to provide the different ministries with information. There are the local apprenticeship committees,

such as ours, the provincial advisory committees and the industrial training councils, and we are very eager to help in any way to improve the situation for ourselves and for the students out there.

Mr. Dale: That pretty well concludes our presentation, but we hope there are lots of questions. It is an area that you could write reams and reams on, lots and lots of pages on, but in essence, the concern we have is that at the high school point, the technical training that is available and the encouragement to somebody going through the high school program to have consideration of motor vehicle repair as a viable alternative are desperately lacking.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We have three members so far who have indicated that they have questions. Mr. Johnston, followed by Mr. McGuinty and Mrs. O'Neill.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I notice there are many references to male and female here. Can you tell me if there are female technicians who are members of the committee?

Mr. Dale: In the Ottawa area, at this point, to the best of our knowledge, there is one licensed or certified motor vehicle repairer. At the beginning of this year, the local apprenticeship committee recognized and put forward a proposal to attract more people into the trade and felt that we should be going after an area that has never maybe been considered as a possibility—obviously, women. In fact, we have developed an awareness campaign through an agency that is pulling together a press conference—it will be held in 10 days—which hopefully will receive sufficient recognition that we can offer a specific training course for women applicants who would like to be in the motor vehicle repair trade.

To directly answer your question, this one person is a shop teacher now in a local high school, as it happens, who has been very supportive of the committee and has been in contact. We are in contact with her and vice versa, and she, with her time constraints, is available. She does not sit regularly on the committee, but she is certainly in touch with the committee.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What about female students enrolled at the moment in the high schools? Do we know where that stands? Are there any?

Mr. Lamarche: Last year, in the days I spent at local high schools, I would say about 10 per cent in a class would be female students.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Okay, thank you. In talking this morning with French-language section representatives who were here, I asked them whether there has been a decline in the tech courses in their system. They gave me a note at the end over lunch which indicates that between 1983 and 1986 there has been a 26.6 per cent drop in the number of tech courses that have been offered in the French system.

Can you tell me, from your experiences as a committee, whether there has been a drop in the number of courses available in the Ottawa area in the two systems?

Mr. Dale: No, there has not. The intake into the community college apprenticeship training program has, in fact, increased over the last five years in this area, which is unique.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: And they are coming from high school tech courses.

Mr. Dale: In most cases, yes, but not necessarily. There may be a bridge. The MAP-40 program is more prone to having them as a direct link. In the traditional three eight-week program, where they are going to be at least a year in the working field anyway, there would not be as direct a link. But predominantly, yes, they would be coming out of a high school automotive shop type course.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do you have any information these days around the stereotypes that you are talking about on the percentage of students in the advanced courses who are taking auto tech courses now, compared with the old when it would have been mostly general-level or basic-level people? Do you have any statistics on that? We can ask the boards when they come.

Mr. Dale: No, I am sorry, we do not.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The last one I have—and I know others want to get in—would be the problem of keeping up to date in the shops. The budgetary problem of that is, of course, an enormous one for the schools. Some people coming before us from the education community have been talking about perhaps trying to do some of this offsite and working with employers to provide these kinds of programs, work experiences and learning experiences offsite. Have you been doing much work to try to formulate that kind of option?

Mr. Dale: Yes, that is a very viable alternative. Some of the original equipment manufacturers, predominantly General Motors, have been very strong and supportive in supplying product vehicles, materials or whatever to the colleges, helping them develop programs.

The flipside of that is that the colleges have been assisting them in presenting training courses for their own specific technicians because it is happening so fast they cannot even keep up themselves on the training.

Other companies have been equally supportive. I guess I have to give equal time if I mention General Motors. Canadian Tire has been very supportive with product and the development of courses in the community colleges; and not only in community colleges but developing upgrading courses and putting them on in their own premises.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What about the high schools? That is an area where the boards, especially the new Catholic boards that are looking at maybe getting more involved in tech courses because they did not do it in the past, are really looking at those kinds of options. Have you been working at all in that area?

Mr. Dale: Yes, we have been, but not particularly successfully. The stumbling block we have been hitting is that the enthusiasm level or the desire to be involved on the part of an individual shop teacher can be 180 degrees—some may be very supportive of it and some really do not care. Unfortunately, the percentages are such that the don't-cares much outweigh the do-cares. The do-care people are themselves upgrading and, as a result, are receiving help and assistance in upgrading. There have been courses developed specifically for high school teachers to partake of, with sporadic success. The feedback we get is that unless they are dedicated and have a personal desire to keep themselves current, there is no other incentive for them to do that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is a very depressing note to end on, unfortunately.

Mr. Dale: It is.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But the positive note we have been hearing is that there will be a huge number of openings because the average age of the tech teachers seems to be very high. Therefore, people like yourself and others getting certificated in preparation for that might change that around.

Mr. Lamarche: I could see myself going into the education system and in the first five years being very gung-ho about keeping up to date, but then when I turn around and see that I would be better off possibly taking a basket-weaving course at the University of Ottawa and get more recognition for it, then maybe I am going to start doing that. As the years go on, you tend to lose interest in upgrading yourself because you are

not being recognized for it, whether it is financial recognition or—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I had no idea about these courses at Ottawa. I will look into them.

Mr. McGuinty: Thank you, gentlemen, for a very interesting statement of a real problem. As you were speaking, I was thinking of a school which is only three blocks south of here, Ottawa Technical High School. I can recall in years past that if you were an incorrigible and considered to be an academic misfit, you were shovelled off to tech. I recall clearly being kicked out of it at least three times.

Mr. Jackson: That was after you joined the Liberal party.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Unless you were manually inept like me.

Mr. McGuinty: You will note also, if you walk around that school, that there is no playing field. We used to walk with our football cleats 12 blocks west to Plouffe Park to play in the cinder field, while the kids at Glebe Collegiate Institute, the academic snob of the system, and Lisgar Collegiate Institute, of course, for the Rockcliffe set, had all the academic fringes. The situation really has not changed a hell of a lot in the last few years.

My colleague and I, Mrs. O'Neill—

Mr. Mahoney: Who will speak for herself.

Mrs. O'Neill: I likely will not have to.

Mr. McGuinty:—spent a couple of summers in Germany as guests of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany. Among other things, in between our beer hall activities—

Mrs. O'Neill: This is not true. The first part was.

Mr. McGuinty:—we studied the apprenticeship system. How many of us say, “I have a wonderful German mechanic, a wonderful Latvian master builder and a wonderful Italian bricklayer”? When you speak of the German mechanic, there is a sense of pride, in other words, which in some way they succeed in instilling in the young people.

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They do it partly this way. Some high schools are gymnasias, which are oriented mainly, perhaps exclusively, towards university admission. It is also recognized that some young people by disposition, by ability—all people are not created equal in all the same ways—are more disposed towards a trade. After a couple of years of high school, they are apprenticed, but their academic experience does not stop then, because for a

number of years, for four months a year, they are brought back to an institute where they study German history, art, culture and philosophy. That is something I think they have done very effectively in Europe and it is something we have to do in this country if we are going to keep up the supply.

Instead of thinking of the kids who go into this as second-rate dropouts, you have to instil in them the fact that it is a career, it is a profession. As you say, it is not merely a grease-monkey refuge; it is something young people can take on with a sense of pride. God knows, the dollar remuneration in itself is considerable. That is the problem we have and I think it is something we have to get involved in as well.

Your recommendations here, I think, are very appropriate. This is not something merely for the Ministry of Education; it is something which transcends that to the ministries of Colleges and Universities, Skills Development, Education and Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology. If we are going to compete effectively, we have to have the supply of young people oriented in this direction.

Also, the question would be raised, to what extent is it the responsibility of the public school system to supply industry with young people for the jobs of commerce? That point has been raised and raised validly. Perhaps we must have more involvement on the part of those firms—and you allude to General Motors and Canadian Tire—which must get involved not for any altruistic purpose but for self-interest. There is nothing wrong with self-interest. That is great.

I am amazed that automotive teachers are not given the opportunity for upgrading. My God, I do not dare lift up the hood of my car—you do not know what the hell is in there—and every time you go back to even your local garage there is all kinds of sophisticated equipment which is constantly changing. It is a very refined skill, and I am amazed that these facilities for keeping people updated in these developments are not current.

On the lack of test equipment I have no questions, but I certainly appreciate your thoughtful, perceptive, pointed and very relevant recommendation. It is something I hope my colleagues on the committee will bring not only to the ministry, but put it forth as an issue that transcends the Ministry of Education, involving Skills Development, Colleges and Universities, Economics, and Industry, Trade and Technology, as well as Education. I really thank you for your fine presentation.

Mr. Dale: Thank you for your comments.

Mr. McGuinty: Mrs. O'Neill, do you recall that summer we spent in Germany?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Is that a supplementary?

Madam Chairman: I am not sure you can ask a supplementary when a question has not been asked, but you could ask a question.

Interjections.

Mrs. O'Neill: Believe it or not, I can actually continue from what Mr. McGuinty was saying. Mr. Lamarche and I have spoken very briefly about this being such a challenge because what you in your paper have presented to us is an actual concerted effort of two, three or maybe five ministries. Since I have gone to Queen's Park, as for most of us here, that becomes the greatest challenge, to get two or three major groups of politicians and then the bureaucrats to come together on something. Your brief certainly challenges us to do that, and I think we have already begun with your presentation.

I would like to ask you a couple of questions. In your recommendation 2, you are talking to industrial training councils. Could you say a little bit about those and how you relate to those in your work?

Mr. Lamarche: The Industrial Training Council of Ottawa-Carleton is a council that is funded both federally and provincially. They respond to industry needs and wants as far as training people who are already in the job market is concerned. They are offering several upgrading courses for technicians right now. There is one problem due to regulations. High school teachers, because they are government employees, are not permitted to take these courses because they are government-funded. Once again, they do not get the proper recognition for these courses.

Mrs. O'Neill: Is the Ministry of Skills Development working on these from the provincial level, or do you know that?

Mr. Lamarche: I am not aware myself.

Mrs. O'Neill: It is interesting that teachers are not included.

Mr. Lamarche: Employees of any government, whether they be municipality of Ottawa-Carleton people who work on the road maintenance vehicles there, are excluded from participating due to regulations.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you for bringing that to our attention. I would like to go to recommendation 3.

I happen to have had the unique experience, for me, of going to Central Technical School in Toronto—with, actually, the Minister of Education of Great Britain, or I likely would not have got in; but I did get in and saw what was there. Obviously it is a showcase of technical education, in Toronto at least. It amazed me that they actually have an aircraft mechanics kind of lab there and that they apparently get all kinds of support from most of the airline companies and both airports. It seemed to have very up-to-date equipment. When you say that trade shops will have to be looked at, I wonder if you could tell us what that means.

I also wonder—and this ties into the question I think Mr. Johnston asked—what both of you gentlemen are doing regarding co-operative education. Have you been involved in that yourselves with the high school students?

Mr. Dale: As far as the automotive trade shop is concerned, this is the shop within the school itself; that is what we are referring to. Where they need help is in either subsidized equipment or some equipment that would allow them to do training and testing on vehicles that are today's technology. In the high school automotive trade shops there is virtually no testing equipment at all, other than a few hand-held instruments. Compare that to a community college where they are actually dealing with the apprentices coming in from a working environment where every day they are using and handling high-technology diagnostic equipment; if they did not have the equipment there they would be getting non-training and certainly nothing they could relate to what they are doing every day.

Mrs. O'Neill: But to your knowledge, in the Ottawa tech schools at the high school level, there is none of that.

Mr. Dale: There is none at all. In fact, the point I would like to make is that, even at the community college level, as an example, they have to budget and pay for the equipment they have. To me, it would be something that could be developed through some of the equipment manufacturers. If there were some incentive for them to put the equipment there on a loan or lease basis, or on a trial or some kind of basis that would be advantageous to them dollar-and-cents-wise and every year to update it, you could provide this equipment and not have to have it come out of a high school budget or a community college budget.

Mrs. O'Neill: Are you and your committee in any position to make that kind of thing begin to happen?

Mr. Dale: No. As a committee, we cannot offer them any kind of dollar incentive. We are a committee composed of employers.

Mrs. O'Neill: And you cannot bring people together to try and make that idea work?

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Mr. Dale: We can certainly encourage it to happen. In our particular situation, because our corporation is fairly large and deals with equipment manufacturers on a fairly high volume basis, we have encouraged them to give concessions to the colleges in the purchase of equipment, which they have because they can balance that off by the hundreds if they are going to sell through the corporation against one or two they may have to give at a discounted price. But there has to be some method that they can put through on their books that is a legitimate business operational procedure that gives them some benefit to do this, as businessmen dealing in hard, cold dollars.

The second part of your question was regarding the co-op. As an employer, we have been very active for years with the co-op process. Personally speaking, we operated the store over here for a number of years and had a very close relationship with Ottawa Technical High School; in fact, even the colleges would send people into our store, as did the Ottawa Board of Education certainly and the Carleton Board of Education occasionally. We are currently operating a store in the east end of the city and, in fact, right now we have four co-op students under way and several more pending.

Different businesses are involved to different degrees. But I think, in general, and I can speak for our group in this area, which consists of 12 stores. We are very aware of the fact that our service centres are crying out for technicians and help. They are becoming very supportive of the co-op program in all areas of their businesses.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you very much for trying to answer my question so clearly.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Jackson has a supplementary on that point.

Mr. Jackson: Regarding the equipment area, there are several things that could be done if we had access to the Minister of Revenue and some flexibilities. The most obvious one is to relieve the tax—

Mr. Dale: Tax breaks of some kind would be—

Mr. Jackson: Sure. There is the sales tax, which is now eight per cent; that was an issue we raised in its broad application to all education. Just a one per cent increase in sales tax cost the

Toronto Board of Education almost \$500,000. That is just one per cent in the sales tax on their consumables.

There are other areas as well. Your committees can provide all the linkage necessary, but when you are writing down the cost of that equipment, the original manufacturer or the agent who is trying to sell you a newer model buys back the other one at a song. But if we could give a very healthy tax credit for the donation of that, it makes very good business sense to donate that to the local high school.

Just from my work with industrial school councils, which I have been involved with, I think where we are falling down is that we will develop this adopt-a-school approach, but it is sort of asking for an adoption without providing the mechanisms to be a guardian—in the analogy of the child. I really think we have to push harder at the Minister of Revenue to see the very obvious benefits.

The real answer is not always totally with the federal government because its tax structures are a little bit different. A lot of the sales tax revenue and a variety of other things that come into effect really are provincial matters.

If you had some specific recommendations along those lines, we would like to have them because when we do the unit on technical training, there is a very simple and clean recommendation with which we might be able to approach the government and say that we support that, especially with the cost of this extremely expensive technical equipment. There are also applications in hospitals, incidentally, but we do not have time to explore that. We are talking substantive equipment which, if handled in a different manner taxwise, would be a tremendous benefit.

Young people like to learn on the equipment on which they will be having their life experience—not all textbook and theory. They are very much hands-on. That is also the means by which, for the students I have watched, you can measure their excellence and the forward progress that they make.

Mr. Dale: That is right. We would be very happy to provide you with a recommendation along those lines.

Mr. Jackson: It is a dry subject. It is all tax law. But really, if you listen carefully to the business community, that is a simple little request. Schools would be happy to be the recipients of equipment that is more current and not so damned obsolete that the reason it is being donated to the high school is that it is cheaper to

ask the school come and pick it up than to pay to have it carted off to the dump. That is, in fact, what has been happening.

Madam Chairman: A final question by Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There is one woman who is certified as a technician at the moment—

Mr. Dale: In the Ottawa area.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There is 10 per cent or so, we think, just in the classes you have been involved with. How many women are there in apprenticeship programs right at the moment to become technicians?

Mr. Dale: In Ottawa?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes.

Mr. Dale: None.

Mr. Jackson: Has the women in trades and technology program been cancelled in this area?

Mr. Dale: No.

Mr. Jackson: It is has been cancelled in many areas around this province.

Mr. Dale: It is very active.

Mr. Jackson: Good. I do not know how you are doing it, but all power to you.

Mr. Dale: We are gung ho and, as I say, we are actively pursuing and trying to attract more women to the trades.

Mr. Jackson: I think it is very discriminatory against women that that program is being cancelled. I am delighted to hear that you have made your case in Ottawa. Congratulations.

Madam Chairman: I would very much like to thank you for your appearance before our committee today. There is an old saying, "Be careful of what you wish for because your wish may be granted." You asked for lots of questions and you certainly got them. We do appreciate that additional information from an area in which we have not had a lot of presentations so far.

Mr. Dale: Thank you for your attention and the opportunity.

Madam Chairman: Our next presentation this afternoon will be by the Frontenac-Lennox and Addington County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Mr. Duffey, please come forward. We understand you had a bit of a drive, so we are particularly pleased you made it in good time in order to join us.

Mr. Duffey: I may look as if I have jogged from Smiths Falls—

Madam Chairman: You probably feel as if you have jogged from Smiths Falls.

Mr. Duffey: —but actually it is just the traffic in Ottawa that gets to you, particularly when you do not really know where you are going.

Mr. Jackson: A lot of people have that problem in this city.

Mr. Duffey: That do not know where they are going.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Duffey, we have allocated a half-hour for your presentation. We notice you have quite a substantial presentation before us; so you may wish to précis some parts, highlight others and simply leave enough time for questions at the end.

Mr. Duffey: Exactly, Madam Chairman. What I have done is prepared something I would like to read to you, a synopsis of what that is.

Madam Chairman: That would be perfect. Please start by identifying yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard and then begin whenever you are ready.

FRONTENAC-LENNOX AND ADDINGTON COUNTY ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. Duffey: My name is Joe Duffey, and I am the chairman of the Frontenac-Lennox and Addington County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. With me today I have Dr. Cosgrove, who is the superintendent of schools with our board.

Although it is a dual-county school community, our main base is in the city of Kingston. Our board is covered by three jurisdictions in the Ontario Legislature. The member for Prince Edward-Lennox (Mr. MacDonald), the member for Kingston and The Islands (Mr. Keyes) and the member for Frontenac-Addington (Mr. South) are the representatives from the area covered by our board.

I am really pleased to be here, because the last time I was in front of one of these committees was when we were dealing with Bill 30 and we were not blessed with the appearance of lady MPPs, and for that I am glad to see that somebody up in Toronto has geared himself in the right track.

Mr. Mahoney: Is that a sexist comment?

Mr. Duffey: If I can get half of you on my side, that is quite a lot. I thought Mr. Keyes might be here and I would have him on my side.

Mr. Mahoney: I will pass that on to him.

Mr. Jackson: Half of us are paying attention to you, and if you can get half our attention, you are doing well.

Mr. Duffey: Madam Chairman, with what you had in mind about hurrying on through this presentation, I would like to paraphrase some of the introductory remarks in our brief.

These last few years have been busy indeed with major changes made in educational practices and philosophies. What has been particularly encouraging is that many of these changes have been made with earned consensus from the three provincial political parties. It is reasonable to assume then that the directions we have been taking are built to some degree on a general base of political support. As the separate school system, we have been required to meet some of these challenges in unique ways.

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Our entry into secondary education as full partners with our coterminous public boards is, of course, quite recent. We are endeavouring to take the best practices from our sister public boards and incorporate them into a perspective on secondary education which we hope is responsive to the times. We recognize through all of this that our purpose is not simply to educate and train young people but to help them grow in faith and commitment to gospel values. We enjoy, therefore, the twin challenges of providing quality secular education while at the same time fostering in our young people an outstanding appreciation of values and beliefs that are central to our view of life.

My comments are brief and I hope they will be of some value to the committee. I know that in our brief we did address a range of issues, some directly related to the organization and delivery of secondary education and some a few steps removed. I hope the committee can appreciate that our interest in sharing some thoughts with you has compelled us to perhaps consider a scope of issues even beyond that which the committee originally intended to entertain. I do, however, take some confidence in the fact that the televised hearings, which I have had a chance to follow to date, have seen a range of ideas and perspectives shared with the committee. I am confident that the range of discussion so triggered is valuable.

Rather than reiterate the specific contents of the brief, I would like to take this opportunity to expand ever so slightly on the comments in some sections and perhaps underscore some of the particularly significant recommendations we have authored.

Education—to what end? Over the last few years, the recurring debate in education has been that of purpose. Is education to prepare citizens, with personal and social attitudes which will

follow them, to enjoy full and meaningful lives, or is it to prepare individuals to meet the needs of the workforce? Interestingly, the debate seems to have been around which course we will follow. There does not seem to have been a major effort, at least in the past, to reconcile these points of view. More recently, there are some signs that educators are talking to business people, and business people, in turn, are listening to and talking to educators.

The phenomenal increase in student enrolment in co-operative education programs is a prime example of that. As well, there have been some efforts in various communities to at least consider the establishment of employment-education advisory committees. In Kingston, the Kingston Area School to Employment—we refer to that as KASE—has been most valuable to us as a source of input and opinion from business and as a means of creating opportunities for students to participate in the world of work as part of their educational program.

I hope the select committee will consider, as reflected in our recommendations, the possibility that school systems would have available to them some means of recognizing the contribution that businesses make to schools or the educational program of the student in a very tangible way. We mean by this, of course, the possibility that, through some mechanism, school systems could award to businesses tax credits in recognition of their contribution to student programs.

Certainly, at this time, businesses are able to rationalize their contributions of time and effort as a means of preparing future employees. However, it would be a means of encouraging more co-operative efforts if boards were in a position to recognize financially in an indirect way the contributions of business. In this regard, as suggested earlier, the growth in co-operative education is most encouraging. However, co-operative education is an expensive venture, and currently the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward), in providing initiative dollars, is recognizing this.

If boards are to make a long-term organizational commitment to co-operative education, however, it is important that some more predictable and stable funding to support this commitment be available. Hopefully, the Minister of Education can be encouraged to make this kind of funding a committee priority.

Education within what limits? No doubt the select committee has heard and will hear again from individuals and groups the expression of concern regarding society's expectations of

publicly funded education. These expectations have not simply grown over the years, but have become more complex. The pressures and expectations of young people these days are far beyond those experienced by most of us in our formative years. The traditional family support system and general community support for certain values and behaviours have lessened.

It is not my intention today to comment from the socialist or moralist point of view on these circumstances. They are very real and need to be addressed. As a consequence, however, of changing social circumstances, there seems to be a heightened expectation of the role of the school in the formation of the young person, not only as learner but as a citizen and healthy adult. Consequently, some of the supports and services required are expensive and beyond those traditionally expected of school systems.

There needs to be in any review of educational philosophy and policy an attempt to clarify the extent of education's mandate, as far as providing support for young people is concerned. At the same time, it would be desirable if such a discussion could address the collaborative role of parents and societies in general. What were given regarding the role of the school and the family in society in the past do not seem to apply today.

There are ministries of the provincial government with responsibilities for service to individuals and families in a number of areas. It is possible that there are overlapping mandates or areas of doubtful or undefined jurisdiction. It seems to us that often in education when an area of responsibility is not clearly defined and associated with a particular ministry, in some way it seems to become the assumed responsibility of educators to address.

The Radwanski report, which I am sure the select committee has had the opportunity to review in depth and will be considering further, is an example of, I believe, just such an attitude. The number of the recommendations outlined expectations for the school system without suggesting that these expectations can be met only co-operatively, with the support of parents or society in general. Our experience is that there are few significant initiatives educators might undertake around the development of standards or attitudes in young people that will be successful without the very direct and physical support of the family.

Education by whose standards? The debate regarding the standardization of achievement testing of students continues to rage. I acknowl-

edge that, on the one hand, the academics express reservations about the effectiveness of current technology in this area, while consumers of education services—that is, children and parents—continue to ask for more objective means of measuring the effectiveness of a school system's efforts.

It can only be hoped that whenever final decisions are made by the Ministry of Education regarding the implementation of external measures of instructional effectiveness, they are done in a collaborative way with boards and with some attempt to respond to the legitimate cautions regarding such testing programs that are voiced by the experts.

Another major initiative in regard to the quality of standards of education relates to the performance appraisal of staff. There is no argument that such performance appraisal efforts are necessary. However, there is a need to ensure that these efforts across the system enjoy certain features in common. If that is not the case, then it is likely that their legitimate criticisms will again be that these efforts lack uniformity and consistency and, perhaps most important, predictability across the system.

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It is hoped that as far as an achievement testing is concerned, any new scheme be introduced in a pilot fashion over time rather than all at once across the province. In this regard, it is important as well that whatever expectations the ministry has of these achievements, testing programs be realistic and communicative at a provincial level to the parents and ratepayer communities.

At the same time, and as the other side of this achievement testing issue, there is a need to acknowledge in a major way that education in Ontario is of a high-calibre quality. While in any enterprise of this type there may be a need to adjust and improve, it is important to confirm that much of what is being done is being done well in accomplishing the objectives of the ministry and the boards in the process.

Education in whose hands? Over the years, the Ministry of Education has, I believe, wisely moved away from extensive direct control of school board levels for educational policies and practices; rather, it has chosen to direct education through the setting of policy. This has allowed the Ministry of Education to feel confident regarding the overall direction of education in the province, while at the same time, providing individual boards with the latitude to engage in the creative and locally appropriate efforts. Much of the current debate around education

seems to be indirectly centred on who is in charge and who gives direction regarding educational practices.

In all of these, there seems to be a growing interest on the part of parents for some more direct role in influencing educational policy and practices. They are bombarded by media analysis of the woes and ills of public education, yet generally do not feel they are in a position to have any particular influence on its course. Related to this issue of control is a particular concern for separate school systems.

From our earliest beginnings, we have enjoyed the right to recruit and employ teachers best suited to our particular view of what constitutes quality education. With the extension of funding, there are now provisions in the Education Act regarding our right to recruit staff, which may in future create a problem for us.

It is hoped that the Minister of Education, in responding to the recommendations that will come from the select committee on education, will reconfirm the current relationship between its policy-setting role and the local boards' authority to make program implementation decisions. As well, some direction from the select committee regarding better articulation of the role of parents by boards would be useful.

Finally, it is hoped that the select committee will give very serious consideration to the provisions in the Education Act which will in future deny separate school boards an opportunity to exercise their traditional control over the recruiting of teaching staff.

Education at what cost? I acknowledge that the costs of education have increased significantly over the years, and perhaps most significantly over the last 10 to 15 years. The provincial government has made efforts to adjust the funding mechanism in a way that provides boards with greater quality in terms of access to educational dollars.

However, it is still the case that boards without access to industrial tax base or with limited local commercial assessment are tied in terms of educational spending very closely to the ceiling set by the Ministry of Education. Boards with access to a much greater tax base are in a position to collect and spend significantly more dollars per pupil on education. There are, therefore, still financial inequities that exist.

As well, there is a public concern regarding how the tax dollars collected provincially or locally are being spent. This concern, I believe, is a function largely of a lack of understanding as opposed to being a consequence of poor fiscal

management on the part of the school boards. It is hoped the select committee will encourage the provincial government to respond seriously to the recommendations of the Macdonald Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education and other reports that have been commissioned over the last few years regarding means to make educational funding more equitable on a board-by-board basis. Also, some co-operative efforts between board and the Ministry of Education regarding the use of ratepayers' education taxes would be very desirable.

Education in what form? I appreciate that the very specific focus of the select committee initially was on secondary education, although I am sure this has not prevented most presenters from dealing with a range of issues. The temptation, particularly in education, to focus on very specific aspects of the enterprise and means of improving the system is evident. However, much of what happens in education is interrelated, and I hope our brief has cautioned against making too many decisions regarding educational practices in isolation.

As well, in education, given that it is a political as well as a people enterprise, there can be very real temptations to make significant changes without recognizing that sometimes communication and understanding of what is currently in place are what is needed and change is not the answer.

It is hoped that as the select committee considers various submissions it has received and the information that has come out of its dialogue with its presenters, it will see the wisdom of avoiding changes for the sake of change. Particularly in this regard, I believe the criticisms of OSIS are premature. We are just beginning to graduate generations of students who have functioned fully under its provision. To suggest at this point, just when we have become accustomed to its requirements, that it is fundamentally flawed and should be discarded seems to me premature.

What is probably more necessary is some articulation of educational policy that crosses divisions. Currently, there exists a primary-junior policy document in OSIS as well as an intermediate-senior policy document, and yet the critical reading of these documents would suggest that they were not written to be complementary. Before OSIS can be discarded, some effort needs to be made to develop a statement of educational policy which spans the

grades and divisions and offers an integrated vision of what education should be.

After this, what? When this board became aware that it might enjoy or have an opportunity to speak to the select committee, it pursued that possibility enthusiastically. I believe it is important for individuals and organizations affected by public education to take opportunities to bring ideas and concerns to forums such as these. To neglect such opportunities and to criticize the results seems to be unacceptable. We believe in the old expression, "If you don't vote, you don't have the right to criticize the government."

However, it may be desirable to consider the establishment or the refining of the existing mechanism to encourage regular, frequent input from individuals and agencies concerning educational policy and practices rather than individuals and groups feeling they must wait for opportunities such as this. They might be more willing to offer comments and criticisms if there were some independent and ongoing mechanism for gathering opinion. The select committee is encouraged to consider recommending the establishment or the development of such a mechanism.

In my concluding remarks, I would like to reaffirm our belief, as expressed in the concluding remarks of our written submission, that the quality of education, with its acknowledged flaws, is high. Education has made a major contribution in bringing this province together. It is a major contributor to the current economical vigour and character of this province. It is hoped that the eventual recommendations of the select committee will acknowledge the quality of our educational system and, at the same time, serve to improve its potential to develop intellectually, emotionally and spiritually healthy young people.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this afternoon. I wish you much success in your discussions and development of your final recommendations.

1640

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Duffey. Just before we go to questions, I am glad you mentioned Mr. Keyes at the beginning because actually on Thursday he asked me to convey his regrets to you that he would not be here. He had been seconded to travel across the province with the standing committee on administration of justice. He said his true love was education and he wished he was here with you.

Mr. Jackson: Madam Chairman, does that mean he has no love of Sunday shopping?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is the way I interpret it.

Interjections.

Madam Chairman: I never asked him, quite frankly.

Mr. Duffey: Madam Chairman, I think it is his first love—that is education. As you know, in our community he was a teacher and a principal before he moved on to wiser things.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is a remarkable statement about the resilience of the school system, that it was able to weather that kind of participation. I say that only jokingly, knowing he was a well-respected member of the education community.

Thank you very much for the presentation. I will not react, I promise, to section 136-1a comments because we fundamentally disagree on that. I will avoid that for now.

Mr. Duffey: I am sure there will be another time for that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes, I am sure there will too.

I would like to concur with your comments about expectations and the need to get a real idea of what current expectations are on the school system. I think it is very important for us to deal with the difference between the mythology of expectations and then to start to try to categorize expectations and say, "These should be family; these should be school, etc." in ways that do not relate to modern society as well. I think that whole area is very important for us to look at, because there are all sorts of mythological expectations around the ability of education to help people out of class confines which have proven to be untrue and really need to be re-examined, even if just from that perspective, but from all points of view you have raised.

I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about your present policies within the board, if I could, on integration of disabled people. At the present, is your policy primarily one of full integration and mainstreaming? Do you have some withdrawal of students from class? What is the range of things you have in the area of the disabled within the regular school system?

Mr. Duffey: If I could, I would let Dr. Cosgrove answer that. That is his field. I have my own personal opinion on it, but I would not want to lead you astray.

Dr. Cosgrove: If we had to be categorized, I suppose we would be pro integration, preferably before-the-fact integration. Over the last number of years, we have reduced our traditional

segregated settings and we have very few segregated programs now. Most of our eggs are in the resource withdrawal basket, supporting students. You are probably aware that in some areas there are some regulations which can militate against full integration of exceptional pupils if we want to define some of those for grant purposes.

We do not in our system define children as this kind of disability or that kind of disability. We simply, where necessary, call them exceptional. I would say that the instance of any student being in a specialized program 100 per cent of his time is nonexistent. That certainly is our philosophy and our desire.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: My question which follows from that is: Now that full funding is through and you presumably are getting more basic-level students in the system than were there before—at least, that seems to be the trend across most of the Catholic system—what is your board's opinion about streaming and moving to some of the options the public boards have looked at?

Dr. Cosgrove: First, I would like to say that in terms of the supports the high schools are able to provide to students, we have built in, again, resource withdrawal support and have not provided segregated options at the high school level except for what we call developmental pupils, which is a term we use as an alternative to trainable retarded, which we find an unacceptable term. But other than that our supports are built and in place for students and available to all students at whatever level of difficulty they happen to be taking a program.

Without wanting to suggest that it is the policy of the board, I would have to say that I am not sure how realistic it is to assume that that kind of complete heterogeneity of programming and teaching is possible. Perhaps one of the advantages or strengths of separate school systems is that many of our high school people were at one time elementary school teachers and they are used to dealing with 30 or 35 kids at a range of levels. Hopefully, that has equipped them to better accommodate a range of needs of children in the secondary situation, because just because you have a classroom of pupils at the general level taking English, it does not mean that they all belong in that program or that they are all operating at a common level of accomplishment.

But I do believe there have to be some distinctions made in terms of the needs students bring to the courses they take and to some extent the level of difficulty or complexity of the

material provided. There may be variations in streaming that are possible, and I certainly would not like to think that by streaming we mean that we define pupils in grade 9 as general-level pupils and basic-level pupils. Our pupils are kids taking a combination of programs at a variety of levels consistent with what they think and we think are their abilities and their needs. I just cannot see discarding streaming or some version of the streaming mechanism entirely. I do not see that as realistic.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Johnston, Mr. Jackson had two brief questions and he has a speaking engagement shortly. I wondered if you would mind if he asked his questions now and we would come back to you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just had the one question which this was leading to. I do define streaming as you are saying, as very much the three streams we have and locking kids into those definitions. We have heard from other Catholic systems, specifically Waterloo, and I know of Wellington county and Hamilton where they are trying as much as possible to do as you are also suggesting.

It seems to me to raise two notions I wanted to raise as my final question. First, if we move towards a much more heterogeneous approach to the classroom, what is the effect of OSIS on that? Put it that way. The second part of it was just a statement supporting in that context your suggestion that the interaction between the public school level methodologies and the high school approach under OSIS is really something that needs to be examined. But I am wondering if there is not a basic conflict between the OSIS style of approach to things and the heterogeneous notion of the classroom.

Dr. Cosgrove: If I could sort of work backwards, I think there is a conflict or there are perhaps several conflicts between the philosophy of education we find in *The Formative Years* and the philosophy articulated in OSIS. In our brief that is what we were suggesting.

We were not necessarily offering any answers but trying to encourage the select committee and those ministries and agencies which may benefit from your final report to get away from the tendency to talk about primary and junior and intermediate and senior education, as if somehow we are dealing with different kinds of kids with different kinds of needs. There are some values in OSIS in terms of expectations and standards which I think some of our primary teachers might like to chew on. There is a view of

the child as the learner in *The Formative Years* that probably is not well articulated in OSIS.

Clearly, if *The Formative Years* has more of an impact on OSIS than OSIS has on *The Formative Years*, I am not sure that means we will have to eliminate streaming, but I think we will have to try to make streaming more responsive to the needs of individual kids. We will probably have to do a better job of helping parents and some elementary teachers understand what the expectations of a school might be for a child who chooses to take a course at one level or another. I am not sure we always understand that as well as we might.

Mr. Jackson: Mr. Duffey, thank you for, as always, an informative brief. Time prevented you from doing justice to all 25 recommendations which you have enumerated. One that caught my eye has just been clarified and that was the conflict in philosophies between *The Formative Years* and OSIS. That was my first question to you. I better understand that.

I appreciate as well your point about the business tax credits. I wish we had more time to look into that. It is an interesting concept. It is not quite what I was referring to earlier but it is similar to that of the previous deputant.

1650

However, I want to focus in on one statement that you made. I do not know if it was in your written text. In the performance appraisal by staff, you mentioned that the lack of uniformity could lead to the process becoming quite meaningless in the absence of distinction. You were talking about the staff's appraisal of students, were you not? My question would reverse that and ask where, if at any point, in your brief or in your written remarks, you talk about the impact of performance appraisal of staff.

Mr. Duffey: I think it is pretty well addressed in the brief. If there is going to be performance appraisal of staff, it should be uniform throughout the province, through the educational system. Is that what you are referring to?

Mr. Jackson: Maybe I heard you incorrectly. I thought you said "performance appraisal by staff of the students." If it was performance appraisal of staff, then I am in total concurrence and thank you for underscoring that in your presentation. You were talking about that?

Mr. Duffey: Probably.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you.

Mr. Reyecraft: I have a couple of questions. A number of times during our hearings, and it has

happened again this afternoon, the discussion has shifted from segregation versus integration, basically in the elementary panel, to streaming versus destreaming in the secondary panel.

I see those as being two different issues. I do not see them as being parallel at all. What I would like to know is, from your perspective as an educational administrator, Dr. Cosgrove, do you see a distinction between the two issues?

Dr. Cosgrove: I do. I think one of the unfortunate consequences of too easy an interpretation of OSIS is to say that basic-level programming is for exceptional students. If you are a slower-learning student or you have some sort of information-processing difficulty and you have had problems throughout your elementary school career, you should go into basic education.

We have tried to suggest that rather than viewing it that way—and we certainly do not consider basic education as appropriate only for exceptional pupils—we should try to look at students in terms of each course. So you could have a very bright, almost an academically gifted student, who for some reason chooses to take all his courses but one at the advanced level and opts for a general- or basic-level course in a particular discipline. That means the offerings of the particular school are responsive to the needs of that student as opposed to the student having to find a slot that he can fit into.

So I agree with you. When we talk segregation-integration, we tend more often than not to be talking elementary schools because that is traditionally where these core or self-contained classes were set up. But if we do not watch against falling into the trap of defining the basic-level program as a program for exceptional kids, we will end up counselling kids, elementary school teachers and parents into directing exceptional learners into only basic-level programming. In effect, basic programming will become the special education program of the high school, which I think would be unfortunate.

I am editorializing and I may not be answering your question.

Mr. Reyecraft: No; you are, and that is very helpful. I gather then you do not feel any inconsistency or contradiction in saying that you are supportive of the integration of exceptional children in the elementary panel and also supportive of a streamed system in the secondary panel?

Dr. Cosgrove: No, I do not see that as inconsistent. I think that what we try to do at the elementary level is provide a range of services to

students, including those students who are exceptional. Substantially, our service to exceptional students is based on a resource-withdrawal model where the teacher works with the students, either by withdrawing them for periods of time or going into the classroom and working with the students or, in many instances, working with a regular classroom teacher in terms of modifying the curriculum and the approaches to assessment and so on.

All those things can happen at the secondary school level. So no, I do not see them as inconsistent. I see streaming allowing for the creation of a series of options in various subject areas, in terms of the level of difficulty and sophistication of the material. If we are working well with students and their parents, they can make some informed choices about taking courses at different levels, depending on their interests and depending on what they see as their abilities in some of those areas.

It really seems as if there is more flexibility in intelligent use of streaming. If there is a criticism of streaming, I suppose it is that maybe we have not explained it well. When I say "we" I am using a generic "we"; I am not just talking about our school system. As educators, perhaps we have not understood it as well as we should or we have not explained it as well. As a consequence, we get parents thinking, "If my kid is having problems at school, he should take basic-level courses." Sometimes he is having problems at school because he should be taking advanced-level courses and, at the elementary school level, we have not clicked to that.

Mr. Reyecraft: I am not sure if we should blame parents or society for that confusion about those courses. As I recall the implementation of OSIS in 1984, we went from having a secondary system where there was, in most secondary schools or in most systems, an occupational program which sort of magically disappeared and was replaced by a series of basic-level courses or basic-level credits under the OSIS program. People who had been in the occupational program suddenly found themselves taking essentially basic-level credits.

I would like to pick up on the comment you made about the student who takes 29 advanced-level credits and one basic-level credit. In your system, do you have any restrictions or barriers that prevent students from taking basic-level courses?

Dr. Cosgrove: Other than timetabling, which is everybody's headache, or just the quality of advice, I would have to say no. We certainly

have no fundamental criteria that you must meet before you can take basic-level programming or advanced-level programming. We have a process where we meet with parents and discuss their son's or daughter's strengths and areas of need. We will make some recommendations, based on our knowledge of the student and our knowledge of what is contained in these various programs, and then the final decision is the parents'.

It should not surprise anyone to appreciate that generally parents take our advice. So, in that sense, maybe we—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Exactly. That is the other side of the argument. Can you restrict under the act? I did not realize you could.

Dr. Cosgrove: No, I do not believe that you can. But I think that you can probably build in some, if not barriers at least administrative potholes. Finally, it comes down to the quality of the advice that you give the student and the quality of advice that you give the parents.

Mr. Reyecraft: Although, as I think of Mr. Johnston's questions, I assume that the same criteria for prerequisites that can be applied to general-level courses or advanced-level courses could probably be applied to basic-level courses as well. I do not know of any place where it happens but, theoretically, I do not see why it could not.

Is the same true of general-level courses, that the only restrictions on students to take those courses are that they meet whatever prerequisites are laid down for those courses in terms of previous courses?

Dr. Cosgrove: There are no requirements in terms of previous grades or their elementary school experience, if they are just coming into high school, that would restrict them necessarily to the choices at particular levels.

We have occasions when we might want to counsel a student to take an advanced credit, when he feels that the challenge is too great and that he is more comfortable with the general credit. We do accommodate, to the extent that we can, the option of doing some switching back and forth. If the student starts out at one level and either runs into some difficulty that we cannot assist him with or actually finds that he is doing particularly well and would enjoy an even greater challenge, we do some movement around. Understandably, there comes a point in the semester or the school year when that becomes problematic.

I suppose I would have to say we bring at times, to some extent, an elementary school

mentality to the secondary enterprise, which I am not sure I apologize for.

1700

Mr. Reycraft: Do you have very many students for whom you recommend basic-level courses who reject that advice and instead enrol in general-level or advanced-level credits?

Dr. Cosgrove: I am not sure I would say we have very many; we certainly have them. In our experience in those cases, 50 per cent of the time we are right and 50 per cent of the time the kids and the parents are right. I would not say that happens a lot. Adults still tend to take their teachers' advice, even if their teachers are their kids' teachers.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am wondering if I have a right to ask your board this, because you have not had the long experience with the streaming process that the public boards have, but have there been any studies—do you know, Mrs. O'Neill?—perhaps by the ministry, as to whether or not there has been any real change since the days when, if you were streamed into the vocational, you were in the vocational—you could get yourself out by taking other courses and repeating a year, essentially, in those days—compared to what has happened since OSIS?

I mean, has it really made any practical difference for those people who are streamed the lowest? We are going to have to work out a definition here at some point or other, because I differentiate between the notion of somebody having one or two basic-level courses and somebody who has been streamed into a full year of basic-level courses and expected only to be able to accomplish that for his career, which is what I have always considered the rigidity of the streaming process to be.

Do you know if there has been any sort of analysis to see if there has been any real shift? In the old days too, it was the following of advice that ended you up coming out of public school into one of those streams. I wonder if there has been any real shift in the way that has worked since OSIS and if there has been any sort of review of that over these last few years. Do you know?

Mr. Reycraft: It would seem to me the data that indicate the percentage of students taking advanced-level, general-level and basic-level credits should be available.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The difficulty is, now we will not know which ones are taking only basic level as easily, will we? Perhaps we can ask that when I get back and really give another good

list to the ministry officials as to the things we need to know.

Dr. Cosgrove: If I could, I would expect that the information, if not available, could be provided. It is the percentage of students who are taking courses across several levels and what percentage are in one level versus another. I expect you would find there is a lot more of that sort of moving through levels than there might have been some years ago when the levels were perhaps a little more rigid.

Mr. Reycraft: I would just caution, though, that even that kind of information might be misleading at first glance, because there are certain courses, phys ed and health, for example, which are normally offered only at the general level. The student would then appear to be taking a mixed-level program. The reality is that he is taking what is available.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I do think that to deal with the whole question of streaming, at some point or other we are going to have to really see if the supposed freedom that is there with OSIS in terms of the ability to take courses at different levels and some transitional programs being available—although not as many as we would like, as we are hearing from various groups—has in fact made any difference in what has effectively been streaming of lower-middle-class kids and certain ethnic groups, specifically, into certain levels of courses in the past.

If it has not, then one of the issues at hand is more where the recommendation is coming from. Why is that recommendation coming out of the public school level? What has caused that to take place over the elementary panel period? That has to be dealt with, rather than the streaming process perhaps. Sorry to ramble on again. I am just trying to think out loud. It is hard for me to do it, either quietly or out loud.

Mr. Reycraft: There was another area on which I wanted to ask a question or two, if I could. I know we are running late.

You make a couple of recommendations about standardized tests. I just want to be clear on what your position is. You talk about pilots and you talk about consultation. Are you supportive of province-wide standardized testing as a form of evaluating achievement?

Mr. Duffey: I have my own opinion.

Mr. Reycraft: I would be delighted to hear it, Joe.

Mr. Duffey: I am here to represent my school board so had I better not give my opinion. I will let the official opinion come from Dr. Cosgrove.

Dr. Cosgrove: I suppose we could be criticized for not being that specific regarding the issue. It reflects in part, I suppose, our suspicion that something that relates to the standardized achievement of student performance may come. We certainly have heard it and then we have not heard it and then we have heard it again. Maybe we are just being a little bit cynical.

I think what we are concerned about is that we do not get caught; that if there is going to be some standardized achievement testing or maybe there would be some sampling system or a menu of standardized assessment programs that boards can kind of buy into, we really avoid a process that generates achievement scores, standard scores, grade equivalents or age equivalents for individual students, so that after we go through the process, Mrs. Brown can phone her neighbourhood school and say, "What mark did my kid get in reading?"

We have had situations with standardized testing where an instrument will place a child in the middle of grade 5 in reading ability and the student has just completed grade 5. The parent phones and says, "There is a half a year's difference here." I think there are some things that have to be understood about the technology to do the comparison.

I am not sure it would be fair to say the board has a position. If it develops one that I could promote, it would be that a complete system of standardized achievement testing across the province would probably be more expensive than the value of the results that would accrue.

However, I think there are some things that can be done in terms of sampling and in terms of program evaluation through the Ontario assessment instrument pool materials that might be of some value. I think we have to respond to this public sentiment that says standards have declined. This may be one way of doing it, but if we are going to do it, perhaps we want to look at three, four or five different ways of getting at the kinds of results we would hope to get from these sorts of programs.

Maybe you could have two or three boards here and two or three boards there, each of which are used as pilots for some of these approaches. Then we evaluate the results of that, not just in terms of the quality of the data, but how useful that has been to the school system and how useful has it been to the various parent communities affected by it, and then make some decisions there.

If something is going to happen, hopefully it is a process of perhaps experimentation, which is

not such a dirty word, and consultation and discussion and not that there be some decision at some point that starting next September every school board in Ontario will do thus and so at these grade levels around standardized achievement testing.

Whatever we do, I hope there would be some understanding that could be communicated co-operatively by boards and the Ministry of Education which says to the teaching community and to the parent community, "This is not a means whereby we can generate sets of numbers that we will attach to your kid so you can use those numbers to compare him to the kid next door, or you can compare those numbers to the numbers or the letters that come in on the report card and you can decide whether or not a decent education is being delivered," because it is not that simple.

Mr. Reyecraft: I am pleased with the response. How do you respond to businesses which say, as they have to us, "We want to see standardized test results of the graduates so that we know they have achieved a certain standard in literacy or numeracy before they become graduates"? How do you respond to those people?

Mr. Duffey: I really could not answer that because, as Mr. Johnston indicated a few minutes ago, we have not been in the high school business that long where people come to us for answers about our graduates. I think we are moving into the grade 13 area right at the moment. It appears to me that businesses, if they are critical of what is happening in the education system, have another forum to do that rather than criticize the school system.

I believe, and I have heard it said, that the Royal Bank of Canada, for instance, in one year spends something like \$1.5 million training people in this country after they graduate from school. I think what could happen in those instances is that they could put some of that money into the school system. They would be able to say, as we mentioned in the brief, "If you do not vote, you cannot criticize. If you are not paying the tune, then you should not be able to do it."

If they want to get a trained person out of school—I think we address that in the point of educating a person or training a person—I think they should be willing to put that sort of money into the school itself, to tell the school people, the educators, "This is what we need in graduation; we need this kind of an operator," but I am really not for that personally.

Mr. Reyecraft: I think Dr. Cosgrove wanted to respond too.

Mr. Duffey: I am always overridden.

Dr. Cosgrove: I am just a humble servant of the board.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They compete with each other.

Dr. Cosgrove: We have to drive back together, you see, so we need something to argue about on the way home.

Mr. Duffey: I told you about running from Smiths Falls.

Dr. Cosgrove: I have a couple of thoughts. Obviously, that question has been asked and you have probably had much better answers than mine. First of all, there is no sense saying you are wrong, you must have hit the one kid who graduated in the last 10 years who really cannot read a technical manual, some kids slip through the cracks.

I think what we need to do is that just as we try to get parents to come into the school, look at what we are doing, tell us what they like and tell us what they would like to see improved, it is not simply a matter of sitting down with businesspeople and saying, "Tell us what you want." With regard to the notion of getting businesspeople in, we probably could be doing more around having some of those people come in and give us advice on programs in the way I think community colleges do a particularly good job. They have advisory committees for various courses.

I think we are, to some extent, committed to the curriculum directions that the ministry sets, but in terms of achieving those objectives I think we can engage in more dialogue with business. I think if a businessman comes into my office and says, "I hired a kid two weeks ago and you said

he was a good student, he got all Bs or Bs and a couple of As, and he can't read," then maybe I had better be talking to that student, because I am more concerned with what we have not done for the student than the fact that we have not been able to prepare a particularly good employee. I think the other thing we have to avoid is this hysteria around, the businesspeople saying, "We do not understand education so we are going to ignore the concerns they express."

Finally, with regard to these horror stories we hear about kids graduating from grade 13 reading at the grade 3 level, I suppose that is possible. I have never met one of those kids, but it is like anything else, we tend to focus in on those horror stories and tend to forget about the other 200 kids who graduated who can read and write and who are capable of doing other things. I think we need to talk a little bit more.

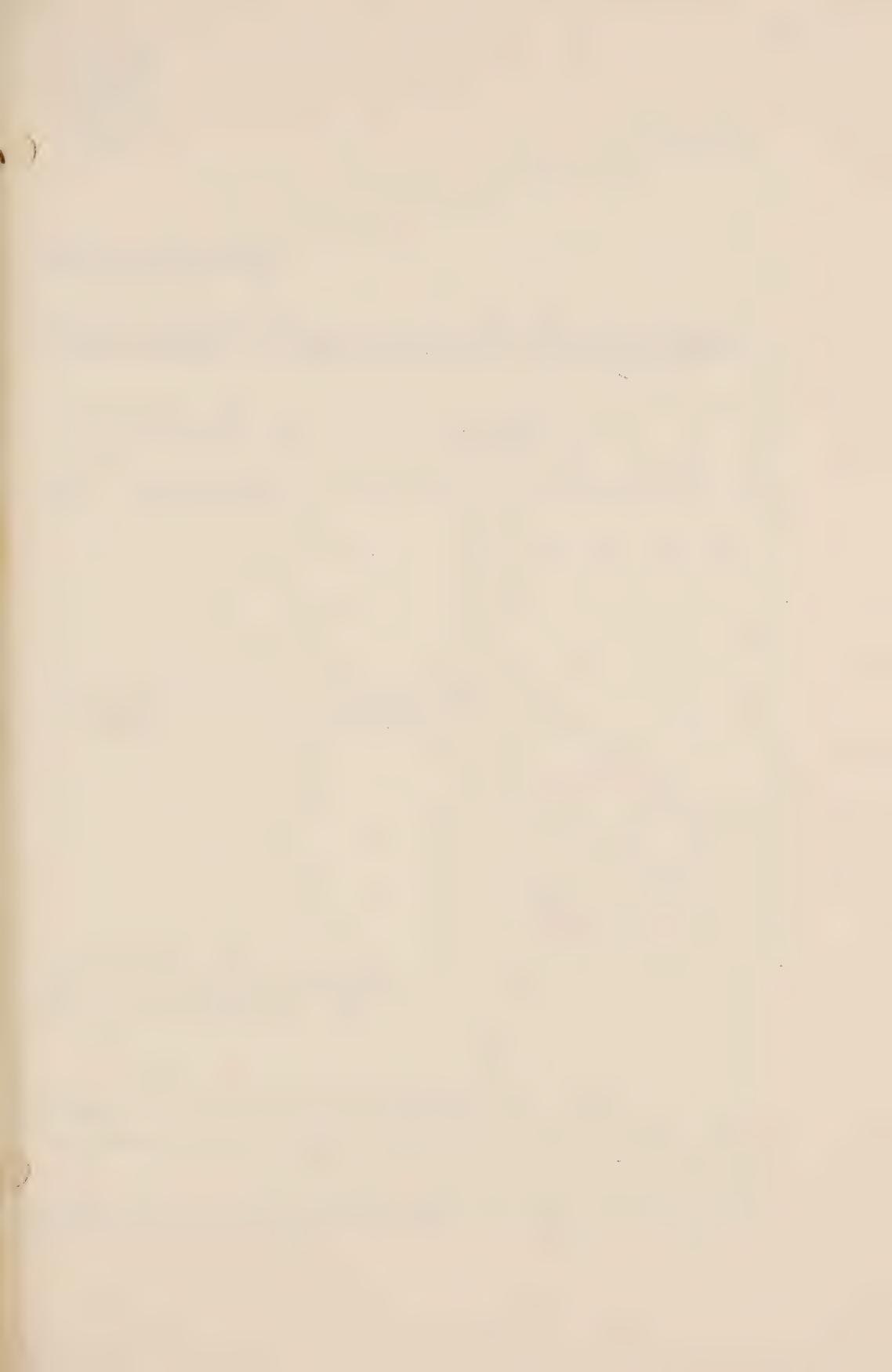
Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Duffey and Dr. Cosgrove. You have certainly put a lot of things in perspective. I think the fact that the members were very interested in your comments was shown by the fact that it ended up being an hour instead of half an hour. Fortunately, because it was the last presentation of the day, we had that luxury and are very glad you came before us today.

Mr. Duffey: It may have gone for two hours if Mr. Keyes had been here, so we are blessed both ways.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Count your blessings.

Madam Chairman: I would remind members that our first presentation tomorrow morning is at 9:30 in this room. The select committee on education stands adjourned until that time.

The committee adjourned at 5:14 p.m.





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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Organization of the Education Process



First Session, 34th Parliament

Tuesday, September 20, 1988

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, September 20, 1988

The committee met at 9:36 a.m. in Delta 'B' meeting room, Delta Ottawa Hotel.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. I would like to open this morning's session of the select committee on education as we continue to review OSIS, streaming, semestering and grade promotion. We have quite a busy agenda this morning, so I think we will start even if Mr. Jackson is not present yet. I would like to start off with a comment by Mr. Johnston, who has some statistics for us.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Members may remember that yesterday I was asking the French delegations before us for some figures on various matters, and very quickly after we adjourned at lunch, Guy Matte from l'Association des enseignants et des enseignants franco-ontariens gave me this information, which you may find useful when we are talking to other boards.

From 1983 to 1986, there was a decline of 26.6 per cent in the number of technical courses in French-language schools, in this area I presume. Only three French Catholic high schools require students to take religious courses, and in all others it is optional as of 1988, according to M. Matte. His research shows that five French high schools had mixed timetable semestering or were not semestered in 1987; otherwise, most of them were fully semestered.

Mrs. O'Neill: Can I ask: on the latter figures, are those across-the-province statistics?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Unfortunately he does not have it here. He just handed it to me as he left, so I do not know. I presume, from the AEFO's position, it probably is, yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am surprised about that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes. It sounds much more like a regional figure to me, but we can check it and try to give him a call.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We will start with our first delegation of Maribeth Poaps, Margaret King and Judith King, if you would come forward to the microphone, please. Take a seat and make yourselves comfortable. We have allocated a half hour for your deputation and we

hope you will leave enough time at the end for questions. You may begin whenever you wish. Please start by identifying yourself for purposes of Hansard.

JUDITH KING
MARIBETH POAPS
MARGARET KING

Miss J. King: Good morning. My name is Judith King. I am one of the members of the presenting body of this brief.

Mrs. Poaps: My name is Maribeth Poaps. I am the mother of Michael Poaps. I am with the party as well.

Mrs. M. King: Good morning. My name is Margaret King and I am one of the members of the group.

Madam Chairman: Welcome to our committee. I believe the members have had an opportunity to look through the brief. As you are aware, we do not have any mandate to make specific recommendations about a specific child, but I do note that you do have some general recommendations which the committee would be pleased to discuss with you. Please proceed whenever you are ready.

Miss J. King: Thank you very much. I will proceed with reading the brief as we have presented it. Membership and objectives: The group presenting this brief is comprised of the extended family of Michael Allan Poaps, who attended Corpus Christi school in Ottawa during the past academic year. Michael Poaps will reach age six this month. The group supported the separate school system up to the end of the academic year 1987-88 and it has made a collective decision to withdraw support from this system.

As recently as the 1985-86 academic year at Corpus Christi school, one person among this group was called by the school and informed that the educators believed the student was encountering difficulty with the curriculum. Away from the brief, that person was myself.

Permission by the school was sought from, and given by, the parents for a psychological assessment of the student. Within the group presenting this brief, at least four members have been psychologically assessed within the Ottawa

separate school system. In all of these cases, covering a time span of at least 30 years, not one student was harmed emotionally, mentally or physically by these assessments. Moreover, some do not recall having been assessed.

This is not the case with Michael Poaps, who waits for psychiatric analysis at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario because he has developed a morbid fear of school. This group believes that Robert and Maribeth Poaps should have received a telephone call from the teachers at Corpus Christi school early in the academic year 1987-88. They did not receive any such call. The objective of this group is to ensure that this suffering Michael Poaps has endured during 1987-88 is never allowed to happen to any other student in this province.

Members of the group are listed below: Maribeth Poaps, Robert Poaps, Judith King, Roseanne Wilson, Bryan Wilson, Guy Wilson, Maureen Brennan, Margaret Saikely, Margaret King, Matthew King, William King, Kimberley Burke, Christina King, Angela Paul, Allen Paul and Lisa Sawatsky. The legend is there for the readers. They include parents of students attending school, parents whose children have graduated from school, members who do not have children and parents of children who have not yet attained school age.

The following is a summary of the main conclusions and recommendation. First, there is no independent body in the educational community of Ontario to which a taxpayer or parent can appeal when there is evidence that the existing regulations, as we understand them, relating to streaming downwardly have been breached and which breach has seemed to seriously jeopardize a student. The taxpayer, parent or guardian is impotent in the face of the unwillingness or inability of all elected school officials to recognize the concern of the taxpayer or guardian, excepting within the timetable of the academic year.

We would like to believe that if a teacher breaches or circumvents the existing regulations, and that if that breach or circumvention is timed to render useless even the elected body, i.e., the government of Ontario, this timeliness on the part of the teacher can render quite useless the governing body. However, this we cannot do, because the forthcoming responses to our letters were those of the Leader of the Opposition in the Ontario Legislature, as exhibit 2, and an immediate telephone response by the executive assistant to the Education critic of the Conservative Party of Ontario, on whose advice we are

here today. We deeply appreciate the quick response to our concerns by the abovementioned gentlemen. Unfortunately, the political implications here do not escape us.

Our second conclusion is that in respect of upward streaming, it has been our experience that the process in no way involves the parents or guardians as to the mechanisms of the process. They are not informed as to the procedure, i.e., the methodology used for selection purposes, the criteria or the expected impact of the outcome. The parents or guardians have no input in this process, and in fact this appears to be subliminally discouraged.

Because we are cognizant of the power of the teachers' union in this province, our recommendations will reflect this reality. We recommend:

1. That an independent body be put into place, a schools ombudsman, that would have the mandate to investigate any evidence from any parent or guardian of jeopardy to any student in any school in all school boards of Ontario. Further, that the mandate include scrutiny of the methodology employed by every school within all Ontario school boards with regard to streaming.

2. That all regulations governing the streaming process be handed to the parents or guardians of the student at the commencement of each academic year.

3. That a rigorous psychological assessment examining the abilities and attitudes of all aspiring teachers in this province be included in the training program of every student teacher. Further, that these assessments be conducted on a mandatory basis at least once every five years during the academic career of the teacher. Last, that these assessments commence immediately, i.e., with the academic year 1988-89, for all teachers holding tenure at the present time.

4. That there be a clause written into every contract of every teacher in Ontario which states unequivocally that the teacher must accept suspension while a complaint is being investigated by the ombudsman when there is evidence that a student is in serious jeopardy and if that teacher is part of the particular environment which may have caused the student to be jeopardized.

This brief is by nature an extensive one. The attachments represent the calls for help by Maribeth Poaps to many members of the educational community in Ontario. In the interest of brevity, each piece of correspondence will be labelled and where no response was forthcoming, it will so state on the label. We would point out, however, that each exhibit labelled "No

Response" will reinforce, in and of itself, our conclusions and our recommendations.

We intend to make short comments on all written responses received by Maribeth Poaps. Each response will be addressed and in chronological order. The exception to this plan will be the responses by the superintendent to Mrs. Poaps and the principal's letter to his superior. We believe that what the principal writes demonstrates his attitude throughout this affair. Therefore, these two responses will be the last to be addressed.

The Education critic for the opposition in the Ontario Legislature writes to Mrs. Poaps and his letter is dated July 29, 1988. That is exhibit 1. The Education critic's letter was the first to reach Mrs. Poaps and was preceded by a telephone call from his executive assistant. His letter indicates his concern, and his advice was taken with gratitude.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Ontario Legislature writes to Mrs. Poaps and his letter is dated August 15, 1988; exhibit 2. The Leader of the Opposition too expresses his concern and offers the assistance and advice of his Education critic to us.

The Minister of Education (Mr. Ward) responds to Mrs. Poaps, and his letter is dated August 23, 1988; exhibit 3. The Minister of Education answers our concerns relating to the possibility of double taxation. We appreciate his efforts in this area. We must mention again, however, that the minister's letter arrived far too late, and all arrangements for the academic year 1988-89 were in place. We have some sympathy for the minister in this regard since reports in the media indicate to us that the minister was preoccupied for the greater part of the summer with the intransigence of the Ottawa separate school board.

The superintendent of the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board responds in writing on July 15, 1988, to Mrs. Maribeth Poaps, whose letter to the superintendent was dated June 29, 1988; exhibit 7.

The superintendent's introductory paragraph is routine. His second paragraph in its entirety is interpreted by this group to indicate that he has not given serious thought to Mrs. Poaps's letter. In particular, in paragraph 1, page 7, lines 3 and 4, Mrs. Poaps states: "It entails not only the possibility of removing my children from the system...."

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In line 6 of his second paragraph, however, he writes: "We will do all that is possible to provide

a Catholic education." The superintendent seems to manifest here either a dangerous detachment from the real world of the classroom or an arrogant assumption that Mrs. Poaps did not mean what she wrote in respect of changing school systems.

The superintendent also adhered to the academic time frame, quite ignoring the reality that this might place the student in a hostile environment in the 1988-89 academic year.

The principal of Corpus Christi Separate School, Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board, responds in writing to the superintendent mentioned above. The principal's letter to the superintendent is dated July 7, 1988, as exhibit 8. On page 1 of the principal's letter to the superintendent, he writes that Michael's teacher of junior kindergarten had noted certain concerns during the year 1986-87. He writes further that both his senior kindergarten teachers had noted concerns as well in 1987-88.

We wish to point out that during the academic year 1986-87, Michael Poaps was four years old, and his teachers' concerns appear to be compatible with the progress of a child whose mother had endured a difficult pregnancy early in that year and who, at the time of school entry, had a new baby brother. In this regard, the teacher's comments, "He talks baby talk" and "thinks it's cute," should have been and were considered to be a natural reaction to the changes in Michael's life.

With respect to the list of concerns for academic year 1987-88, we would simply advise that Michael has been seen by a clinical psychologist and we are satisfied that all of the concerns listed were not problems created by intellectual or learning disability.

Away from the brief for a moment, I would like to quote part of a letter we received last week from that clinical psychologist. Under "Intellectual Functioning" it states, "On the Wechsler preschool and primary scale of intelligence, Michael demonstrated quite conclusively that his intellectual ability is within the mid-average range. These scores occurred on verbal performance and full-scale results."

Back to the brief, in his comment following the list of concerns, Mr. Charbonneau writes in line 4: "The family did not respond to these invitations." This statement will be dealt with below in its proper place. In line 6 of his comment, the principal writes, "The above concerns were brought to the attention of the school psychologist," underlining added by us.

In paragraph 1, line 6, if the principal had asked the teacher to call Mrs. Poaps on June 21, 1988, the teacher certainly did not say so during that telephone conversation, nor at a later date.

In paragraph 2, line 2, the principal implies here, by his written words "a Mrs. King," that he did not know Mrs. King, when in fact they had ongoing telephone communication dating back to his instalment as the principal of Corpus Christi school in September 1986. Also, he had met her personally when she taxied the youngsters to school because of a transportation problem, when the junior kindergarten teacher called him down to meet her in the fall of 1986.

He purported on June 24, 1988, that he "did not remember" meeting her before. Therefore, we must call his written words misleading, and in fact, what he writes in lines 6, 7 and 8 simply did not happen. In fact, he went off looking for the teacher, came back to the telephone and told Mrs. King that the teacher had gone for lunch but that he would have the teacher call Mrs. King later that afternoon, which she did. At no time did he say he would discuss "this" at the coming meeting on Friday, two days later. Moreover, he went to great lengths at that meeting to ensure that we did nothing of the kind.

To prevent this issue degenerating into a name-calling contest, we think it would be prudent to check with the school secretary, who may not be willing to corroborate the principal's statement regarding his telephone conversation with Mrs. King. The secretary may wish to acknowledge the fact that Mrs. King called later that afternoon asking her to request the teacher not call her that day, since Mrs. King then understood very well what had happened to Michael that Wednesday morning. What we are basically saying here is that, up to this point, the principal has attempted to mislead by implication, by omission and directly.

Mr. McGuinty: Madam Chairman, may I raise a point of order?

Madam Chairman: Certainly.

Mr. McGuinty: I think this submission is imprudent. I think we are imprudent in having this presented at a public meeting. We are having statements here that impinge upon the professional competence and honesty of people in the school system. These people should be here if we are going to have an inquiry of this kind, with accusations and charges levied. I think it is most unwise to proceed. If there are principles to be extracted from this report that have to do with establishing a mechanism whereby parents can resort to an official to intercede on their behalf,

so be it, but I find this most distasteful. It is wasteful of time, most inappropriate and, I think, very dangerous, and I want the record to state that.

Mr. Reyecraft: I do not mean in any way to make light of your concerns about Michael, but I am somewhat sympathetic to Mr. McGuinty's concern in that I am not sure either that this is the proper place to deal with this matter.

This select committee has a mandate to review certain aspects of the educational system in the province and to report to the Legislature about recommended changes in that system. It is not supposed to function as a forum for dealing with specific complaints about individuals or specific incidents within the educational system. Quite frankly, I think Mr. Jackson has been somewhat unfair in that he has misled you in suggesting that this would be the appropriate forum in which to present your concern.

I agree that this is not the appropriate place to deal with the concerns about Michael. If there are more general aspects of the educational system that we could deal with, then we could certainly undertake discussion of those with the delegation.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Although I am quite sympathetic to what the two members are saying, I think we also have to look at what the usual process is in committees in terms of how we restrict or not restrict the presentations given to us. We are not a tribunal and, therefore, we should not be making judgements on any of the individual matters of the particular case that is being brought forward; that is true. The fact that they can be used in evidence to make a point before us is the right of a deputation to make, I suggest.

I think that it does not probably bear going through much more of the detail of it, because we have it in writing and there are some general points from it that you do make which we should have a chance to interact with you on, but we cannot make a determination on the individual case itself.

It is always a dangerous thing when some of the kinds of things that you are now talking about may involve legal activity. It is quite possible that action on one side or the other could be taken in terms of libel and other kinds of matters in this. It would be wise to caution you about using a public forum to make those kinds of statements. It is something that you should get legal advice on before you proceed on it.

I suggest, if it is all right with you, Madam Chairman, members of the committee and the

deputants, that perhaps we would take as read the rest of the presentation. If you have any more comments you would like to make on some of the generalized problems around streaming up and down that you mentioned, or appeal mechanisms and that kind of thing, I suggest you concentrate on those for a few minutes and then we can go to questions on the matters at hand.

It is not our role to make a determination, although it is certainly your right to make the general points you are making by using this specific case of what has happened to an individual within the system. That is your right to do.

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Mrs. O'Neill: May I just suggest that there are established channels of communication in every school system. I think it would be most helpful to those of us who are present if you would state those without names and state the number of times or what your concerns were, how far up the channels you went and what avenues of recourse you tried. No names. No details. We have the letters and the exhibits.

Mrs. M. King: We were trying our very best not to use names because that is what we were instructed to do. First, we were instructed by the superintendent to write a detailed letter, which we did, and then we were instructed by your chairperson not to use names. We fully realized why not, but this is new to us. Further than that, we did explore every channel, as is self-evident in the brief and as said at the outset.

Further than that, we are talking about streaming where a child was streamed downward with no psychological assessment whatever and that for the two preceding years, six children each year had been done. It just happened that Michael had to be one of the six who were streamed downward this year. That is what it is all about. Why did we not get a telephone call? That is the essence here. No name-calling, no anything. There is name-calling and combative behaviour but not on this side. We are asking a question. Now, Mrs. O'Neill, to whom do we appeal?

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mrs. King. We certainly sympathize with your frustrations with the system. Any parent who has ever dealt with the education system and anybody who has tried to go through a bureaucracy sometimes finds it is difficult to get his point across. You have made some quite specific recommendations which do not mention names but which bring your case forward and I suggest that we focus on those recommendations. As several members

have mentioned, the brief has been read, members are aware of the background information and we do appreciate that you are using the background information to substantiate your points.

Mrs. M. King: Which is what was asked in the brief, to give factual information. Right?

Madam Chairman: Yes, but in view of the fact that we cannot interfere or intercede in an individual child's case, it might be more appropriate if we stuck to the general recommendations and perhaps pursued questions in that line. For instance, I was noting you made comments about the streaming and the need to know early on what your child's options are. That is something we have heard before from parents, that they would like more information and certainly earlier on. We are very glad to get substantiation from that viewpoint.

I had a question myself I was going to ask you about the school's ombudsman. I have a little sympathy for that concept because, as I say, sometimes parents do feel a little frustrated in the system and they have nowhere to turn. But I was, quite frankly, somewhat dismayed by your item 4 on page 5 where you say that there is a clause written into every contract of every teacher in Ontario which states unequivocally that the teacher must accept suspension while a complaint is being investigated by the ombudsman's office when there is any evidence that a student is in serious jeopardy and if that teacher is part of the particular environment which may have caused the student to be jeopardized.

That for me is a difficult concept because it means that if there is a complaint to this ombudsman, if it was set up, the teacher would be basically deemed guilty until proven innocent because it sort of predetermines that there has already been an investigation and that the teacher has committed some unacceptable actions.

Mrs. M. King: We might have been a bit draconian, but you are sort of hamstrung at the end of the academic year. I am saying that this does not apply to all teachers; there are not very many teachers whom I have met in my life who would do these kinds of things. However, if you are going to have to plan to change schools or something to protect one child because the evidence is blatant, how do you do that then? Ombudsmen do not go around just accusing people and telling them, "You have to be off." There has to be concrete evidence that there has been some kind of circumvention of the accepted rules. That might be an impartial person.

It is where a child is in jeopardy. How could he go back to school with those teachers? Whether or not they are protagonists or caused the child's problem, no one has said that, but it will come out in the fullness of time, the time, who, why, when and where. We are assured of that.

This healthy little boy is now not emotionally healthy. No one is saying anyone is guilty. You have to find out where. But if a clinical psychologist has said, "That is a hostile environment," what do you do then? Change one child—already his emotional health is diminished—alone or get the persons out of the place just for the time?

It does not say anybody is guilty of anything. It will say in the fullness of time if there was any guilt or culpability, but what does one do when those proper steps are not taken? They are taken early in the fall. Every teacher I have ever met has known early in the school year. When they see a bit of difficulty, they are on the blower to you immediately. There is just a two-way action here between the parent and the child, if they are not complete idiots, to see what they can do.

To me, a psychological assessment has never been harmful, but it was not done and it was not done for a reason, because six kids were picked for this academic year, the one before and the one before. Nobody knows of that class. There is no class, but there is one and it is in progress right now as we speak.

Mrs. Poaps: When I phoned the superintendent and told him about it, he was unaware that it was happening. He said: "Please do mention that in your letter. I am unaware of that." That is his school.

Madam Chairman: Mr. McGuinty, you had your hand up again?

Mr. McGuinty: First of all, please do not construe my intervention as a lack of sympathy for the kind of situation you encounter. I realize that parents are faced with what they conceive of or encounter as a kind of monolithic bureaucracy of the system, the old boys' network, the defensive mentality that you sometimes get within particular schools. I think that is a fact of life. During my 31 years' experience as a teacher, I saw it. As a parent of 10 children with children in schools public, private, separate, bilingual, French and reform, I have had the same experience.

At the same time, during the 16 years I was a trustee on a local board, I spent a lot of my time running interference on behalf of parents. There are trustees in the separate school system in Ottawa who do likewise. As to the need for

having an ombudsman, what you are doing here is casting aspersions upon the professional competence of principals who, by and large, are competent, concerned, responsive and receptive. The kind of psychological testing here that you would impose upon teachers is little less than a reign of terror. I find it nonsense.

With all due respect—and I am glad Mr. Jackson arrived—if Mr. Jackson misled you and stimulated you into this very imprudent presentation, perhaps he might be able to elaborate on his motivation.

Mrs. M. King: May I just ask one question, Mr. McGuinty?

Mr. McGuinty: Yes, you may.

Mrs. M. King: Why do you call it nonsense when people change—

Mr. McGuinty: Because it does not make sense. It is not necessary.

Mrs. M. King: Ever?

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Mr. McGuinty: When teachers are being hired, when they are being interviewed, when they are being taught, when they are going to teachers' college, teachers along the way make that judgement. Principals constantly make that judgement. Superintendents make that judgement. Area co-ordinators make that judgement. Trustees on personnel committees make that judgement, constantly.

Mrs. M. King: Make what judgement?

Mr. McGuinty: Regarding the psychological comments.

Mr. Mahoney: On a point of order: This committee is here to deal with streaming, OSIS, semestering and things of that nature, and I do not think we should be degenerating into dialogue between a deputation and members. I also really feel we should get on with our purpose here, which is to deal with those issues in education.

I think the point has been attempted to be made, and while we can appreciate the use of an individual example to make a point I would like to get to that point and I think we should do that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I will get to some of the points that are here, because I think there are some valid points that need to be discussed. The issue that you are trying to deal with, the ombudsman idea, is not an invalid issue. We do have an ombudsman at the provincial level for certain things, which does not presume the incompetence of every civil servant that people

might have a complaint against. It is just a process that is there for appeal.

The notion that there might be appeal processes within the board or within the ministry is a notion which I think we should look at in terms of what do parents do if they are unhappy with the streaming or other kinds of decisions that may be made about their child. I think that is legitimate and there are answers to that. It is something that should be raised.

I just want to be clear. What is the age of the child that we are talking about?

Mrs. Poaps: He is turning six next week.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: So this is not really a streaming issue. This is a promotion issue, which again is a question that is on our agenda to deal with.

Mrs. Poaps: It is streaming.

Miss J. King: It is streaming downwards.

Mrs. Poaps: They wish to stream him downwards.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is a definitional problem. The streaming we were talking about is the notion of being streamed into vocational, general or advanced in the secondary level and preparing for that.

Miss J. King: There is streaming advanced and downwards, is there not?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But promotion up or down, retention, or moving somebody down is another matter, which is also something we are asked to deal with; so it is very legitimate to raise that.

I wonder if you know whether or not this policy prevails for children at that level within the board that you are dealing with. One of the things we have heard is that there is really no point in having any promotion or penalty to a child in these very early stages because of the huge range of maturation of the children coming into the system.

Have you been told whether this is a policy, that this kind of step can be taken with a child?

Miss J. King: We asked the teacher, we asked the principal and we asked the superintendent, "What is this board's policy in this regard?" I was contacted personally two years prior for my son who was in grade 2 at the time, certainly not senior kindergarten. Where did the policy change? When did the policy change? It was not the same one that they followed with me. They refused at all corners to tell us what the policy was.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Did you go to the trustees? That is one thing that was not clear

when I looked at this. You seemed to go to superintendents and functionaries, but not to the elected officials.

Miss J. King: No, we did not approach any trustee. Perhaps it was an oversight. We thought we were approaching the persons in authority. We have the principal, the superintendent, the Minister of Education. We thought we went right up the line. I do appreciate Mr. Jackson's suggestion to us, Mr. Reycraft. I do not believe he misled us to show us here.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There seems to be a trucking boycott of some sort taking place here at the same time. That noise can definitely do psychological damage to members of the committee.

The kinds of questions that you raise are the kinds of questions we can ask of the board when it presents. That is the kind of thing that we are anxious to know about, policies within the province. One of the principal things that seems to be reflected here is that parents need to know where they can go in terms of making appeal and how that works. If that has not been clear to you in this case, that is really unfortunate. That really should be clear-cut for all parents.

Thank you for coming. We appreciate it. I am not dismissing you; I am just thanking you personally.

Madam Chairman: Just before you go, we technically have run out of time, but I know a lot of the time was spent on process as opposed to some of the recommendations you made. I think Mr. Reycraft had a final question.

Mr. Reycraft: Not really a question. I just want to try to be helpful. Under a piece of legislation that is commonly referred to as Bill 82, every board of education in the province is required to have a committee whose mandate is to review, consider and recommend about the placement of students. A teacher or a parent can request that that committee—it is known as an IPRC, identification and placement review committee—undertake a review of the placement of a particular student.

It seems to me that that would be the formal mechanism you should be utilizing to review Michael's placement. There are formal appeal procedures in place under that special education legislation, and I am sure that officials at the school or your trustee can give you more information about it. I think the board is also required to have a little handbook that describes the committee and the process that you can go through. I recommend that to you.

Mrs. Poaps: Perhaps that would be one of our recommendations, that these processes be handed to the parents at the commencement of the school year.

Mrs. O'Neill: May I suggest that if a parent requests an IPRC, there is absolutely no way in which a principal can deny that. That is protected by legislation and is certainly something, as Mr. Rey craft has suggested, that should be explored first. I hope you will do that with whatever board your son is attending.

Mrs. Poaps: So this is in Bill 82 and it is a requirement on every school board in this province?

Mrs. O'Neill: Every school board. It is a part of the Education Act now.

Mrs. Poaps: And since when has it been in place?

Mrs. O'Neill: It has been fully in place for two years.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: September 1, 1985.

Miss J. King: In that case, where would we go when we get a call at the end of the year, when the schools are closed down, the school board is closed down and the Legislature has risen?

Mrs. O'Neill: I presume from the presentation of your brief you do not know all of the avenues of education that are here. There is a regional office at Merivale and Meadowlands which is open all year round. They would be able to help you proceed if you are not able to get somebody at your school board. But I am very sure that the school boards, any of the four school boards, do not close down totally. You may have to go beyond your principal during the summer months, but certainly there are people in attendance at school boards.

I am very sorry that somehow or other the channels were not as open to you or somehow was not explained to you, but there should be, and I am almost positive there are, handbooks in this community that would have described your rights to you and the channels to fulfil them a little better.

Madam Chairman: Mrs. O'Neill, in view of the fact that we do have our next two presenters waiting, may I just suggest that we pass on, through the clerk, the address and phone number of the presenters, and perhaps your office could provide them with some information on the channels available to them? Would that be appropriate at this stage?

Mrs. O'Neill: That is possible. I can certainly do that.

Madam Chairman: We would very much appreciate that. As I think you have detected, some members are sympathetic to some of the things you have gone through. However, this may not be the appropriate forum in which to get some of those things aired. We have looked, though, at your four major recommendations and I think, again, certain members have sympathy with parts of them at least. I wish you luck with Michael's future education. I hope that it can be resolved.

Our next delegation is the Integration Action Group. Would you come forward, please. Members do have copies of the briefs in front of them for this group. Welcome to our committee, gentlemen, as we continue to look at OSIS, streaming, semestering and grade promotion.

We have allocated half an hour for your presentation, including question time. We apologize in advance for running late, but we have had an interesting morning. Hopefully, you will make it a little more interesting and pose a few more questions for our committee.

You may begin whenever you are ready. As I mentioned, though, we have half an hour allocated, so we hope you will leave time for the members' questions. Please begin by introducing yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

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INTEGRATION ACTION GROUP, OTTAWA CHAPTER

Mr. Kazmierski: Thank you, Madam Chairman. My name is Carl Kazmierski, and I am the chairman of the Ottawa chapter of the Integration Action Group. On my right is Al Perks, who is a parent member of our group, and on my left is John Barker, who is vice-chairman and also a parent member of our group.

The Integration Action Group is an association of parents, educators, and concerned citizens who believe that the best way to prepare children with exceptionalities for life and work in the community is through education alongside their peers in neighbourhood schools.

Provincially incorporated as a nonprofit organization, the group operates through provincial executives and chapters in York region, Brantford, Guelph, Mississauga, Sarnia, Toronto, Ottawa, Orillia and several other centres in Ontario with affiliates in other provinces and in the United States of America. The rapid growth of the IAG in Ontario is an indication of the desire of many parents and educators for a greater range of opportunities for exceptional children

than that which exists in many cities and towns in this province.

Our group has prepared briefs and made presentations to all levels of government in Ontario over the last several years. This brief was prepared for your committee because we wish to express our concern about the organization of education in Ontario, and of special education in particular. This is where we overlap with streaming.

In our view, current educational policy does not meet the needs of many of our children in terms of both administrative processes and program availability. In many instances today, the system fails to take advantage of opportunities for integration and thereby relegates children with special needs to segregated facilities with the result that their opportunities for community living, at present and in the future, are substantially diminished. This has immediate and long-term negative consequences which affect the individual child as well as society as a whole.

The present legislation, in our opinion, and the philosophy which underpins its implementation by many school boards, creates a predisposition to segregated education for exceptional children. In many places, this has led to the proliferation of separate classes for children of each exceptionality. The result has been that identification and placement review committees, when faced with the placement of a child deemed exceptional, have looked first to the range of options available in segregated classes for the particular exceptionality, rather than explore the possibilities of delivering an appropriate program for that child in an integrated setting.

Such an approach to education for exceptional children is based on a very questionable premise, namely, that children with the same exceptionality are homogeneous and will benefit most by learning in a segregated environment containing other children with a similar exceptionality. This placement, by label in essence, concentrates on a child's weaknesses and attempts to provide a remedy for them rather than building upon his or her individual strengths and abilities. Whereas in every walk of life we celebrate human diversity and the benefits of exposure to a variety of people and experience, in this instance we condemn one group in our society to experience life only with other people possessing similar disabilities, and this in the formative years. In doing so, we ignore the fact that in all other aspects these children are individuals with their own personalities, strengths and weaknesses, just like the children in the regular grades.

This presumption of homogeneity immediately limits the expectations of others regarding the abilities and the potentials of such children. A further consequence of the present system is that this segregated placement is often not even in the child's own neighbourhood. Busing to a central location is quite frequent, with the result that the child is denied even a minimal contact with his local community during the schoolday, making the building of meaningful relationships in nonschool hours even more difficult, if not impossible.

This system has further led to a very limited view of the responsibilities of schools in regard to the total development of the individual child, whether handicapped or not. It appears to concern itself only with the academic development of a child, even in the limited sense described above. Where such development is presumed to be impossible or, at best, very minimal, as in the case of so-called trainable mentally retarded children, various life skills programs are often provided, which, by and large, are unable to provide for the social development of the special needs child. Given that both social and academic development are vital to achieving one's full potential in adult life, this lack of commitment to the social development of the child is a major obstacle.

Thus, in a system with a proliferation of special, segregated classes, the child must fit the program and not the program fit the child. Having been identified as exceptional, a child is often slotted in the most convenient available placement. He or she must adapt to what the system offers rather than the system looking seriously at a child's unique needs and working to best deliver the necessary individual program.

For the child placed in such a segregated environment, there is a loss of self-confidence and a reinforcing of the difference between the child and his peers rather than of the many more traits that they share in common. This separation makes it almost impossible for the child to become friends with any but a small subset of his or her peers who possess the same label. The present system is telling them that it is not okay to be different—if you are, you are removed from the rest of the kids—and, above all, that they do not belong in the same community.

The adverse consequences of this system are most immediately felt by the special needs child, but there are real consequences for the average child as well. Let us not be blind to the fact that by segregating these kids on the basis of their differences, we are sending the same message to

the average child: "These children are different. They do not belong." Thus, we deny the average child the enriching experience of interacting with people with a wider spectrum of strengths and weaknesses and encourage the view that only the normal is acceptable and that discriminatory treatment of people with differences is acceptable in our society. As long as we encourage the view that these children do not belong, that they do not deserve the same treatment as other children, then we will perpetuate the problems that they face as adults.

By favouring the system over the child, unimaginative homogeneous placements over individual educational plans, custody over community, the educational system is failing these students. It is depriving them of real opportunities to develop the social and academic skills and abilities that they will need to live a meaningful life in our society.

Segregation is a form of discrimination. The view that separate is not equal is as applicable to people whose differences are physical and/or mental as it is to those whose differences are racial, linguistic or religious. We believe that the system can serve our children better. We believe that it needs to embrace a philosophy that recognizes its responsibility to prepare all children for full participation in and contribution to society. Judge Rosalie Silverman Abella's comments in the report of the federal Commission of Inquiry on Equality in Employment summarized our position very well:

"The school is society's instrument for preparing children for full participation in the community. That is why, in the 19th century, we accepted the principle of compulsory, universally accessible public education. Schools prepare children for their metamorphosis into effective and productive adults....

"Children who are disabled suffer tremendous disadvantages at the hands of the school system, partly because there is no consensus on whether separate facilities or integration into the public school system serves them better....

"Wherever possible, the disabled child should learn alongside children who are not disabled. This should be the rebuttable assumption. It may involve extra tutoring, the use of an attendant or specially designed programs to supplement the classroom instruction.

"From the earliest age, disabled children should see themselves as part of the mainstream of society, and children who are not disabled should see them the same way. These enabling perceptions, carried into adulthood, have the

power to affect, on both sides, expectations about the extent to which the community is and should be accessible and about standards of behaviour in the workplace, both for employers and employees."

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It is against this background that we make the following recommendations.

1. That the Ministry of Education clearly act to ensure the right of all children to quality education.

Present educational policy and legislation is open to differing and conflicting interpretations with regard to children with special needs. What is, for example, the meaning of "appropriate," "needs-based," etc.? This has led to uneven and, in many case, inappropriate programming for many exceptional children. It is therefore necessary that any statement of educational objectives be clear and unambiguous in this regard.

The right to equal treatment under the law is essential to our democratic way of life. If it is accepted that all children can learn, then it follows that all children have a right to a quality education, one that offers all children the opportunity of developing their own potential, whatever that may be.

Research and experience have demonstrated that even the most severely handicapped students are able to learn and benefit from regular interaction with their nonhandicapped peers. It is necessary therefore to stress that all children, regardless of type or degree of handicap, are to be offered programs that maximize their opportunities for personal and social development.

2. That educational programming be truly based on the needs of the individual student, in light of the primary objectives of the education system to maximize his or her potential for community living and independence.

The IPRC process was set up to identify students with exceptional needs so that boards of education could then provide those students with appropriate educational programs. In our experience, the IPRC process and the programming that has often resulted from it have often isolated these children and caused friction between parents and school officials. This is often caused by a basic difference in the goals of the participants and by the limited choice of placements offered to achieve those goals.

Individualized programming is, of course, only a means to an end; it is not an end in itself. Its goal is to facilitate the participation of the individual student in society as fully as he or she is able. Such programming must therefore

maximize the opportunities for present participation in community life as well as prepare for future full participation within the community.

3. That program planning be a co-operative effort involving parents at all stages of the child's career.

Professionals are often hesitant—and this is not only in the education system—to seek out the active participation of parents in the planning or delivery of programs. Co-operation often means that parents are invited and expected to go along with what the professionals have decided. Yet many of us have found that the professionals have seriously underestimated our children's ability to cope with and, indeed, to contribute to their environment. This has led to a great deal of frustration and disillusionment with the special education system, particularly on the part of younger parents, who have often been more in tune with advances and developments in the education of exceptional students. Parents are the ones who know their children the best but who are the least listened to about what they can and cannot do.

In recent years, a number of models have been developed which are proving very effective for realistically developing goals and planning programs for even the most hard-to-serve students. MAPS, formerly the McGill Action Planning System, is one such model that was developed at the Centre for Integrated Education, which is now situated at Frontier College in Toronto. It is being used by a number of boards in Ontario with a great deal of success. The key to all of these models is the intimate and continuing involvement of parents, and even peers, along with school officials and professionals in the entire process. The use of these models must be encouraged and further developed with the support of the ministry.

4. That the onus of the system be placed on mainstream education of all students. Any segregated placement should be utilized only when it can be clearly demonstrated that it would be more beneficial in a specific instance and for a specific purpose.

Mainstreaming is perhaps the most equivocal term in the field of integrated education. It seems to mean many things to many people. We mean special programming in regular classrooms with age-appropriate peers. This is the goal. It is one that is being achieved day by day in some schools. Our question is, "Why not in all schools?" Mainstream education should be considered the logical normal option unless specific, demonstrated circumstances dictate otherwise.

There is an unmistakable movement away from segregated schools by parents of exceptional children who increasingly look at them with disfavour, even in those places where full integration is not an option. This is in keeping with the broader movement in society recognized by the present policy of the Ministry of Community and Social Services which actively supports community placement of all handicapped persons.

The result of this movement ought to be foreseen, supported and planned for by the Ministry of Education in co-operation with the other ministries involved. In the meantime, we strongly recommend that placement of a child in a segregated class be authorized only where it can be shown to be more beneficial than a supported integrated placement and only with the full co-operation and consent of the parents.

5. That the expected placement of all children be in age-appropriate classrooms in their home schools.

This recommendation of course follows from the previous one, but stresses the importance of community in the education of our children. It has been recognized that peer group modelling and interaction is extremely important for exceptional children, as well as for those without disabilities.

People with handicaps are often treated as children all their lives, on the theory that somehow or other they will be happy that way. This, of course, makes it impossible for them to function at any but a minimal level and perpetuates the myth that they must be provided with custody rather than accepted as part of the community.

As a result, many of our children are not able to hold any kind of productive and fulfilling positions in the workplace or to take an active part in community life. This is true not because they cannot perform a productive task but because they have not been given the opportunity to develop the social skills that are necessary to work with others.

Placement in the local community school at age-appropriate levels promotes relationships of understanding, tolerance and co-operation among all students and provides for the building of a sense of security and self-esteem and provides for support systems that are not possible in other settings.

These must be seen as primary goals of the educational process, second to none in the education of exceptional children.

6. That the Ministry of Education emphasize that special education is part of the core responsibility of the board and not an adjunct or separate system as is now often the case, and that it ensure that funds and resources be allocated in a way that favours the integration of special needs students and programs rather than their segregation.

7. That boards which have adopted fully integrated systems be supported and encouraged in a significant way as a signal of the ministry's serious intent in the matter of integration.

The province of Ontario has been known for imaginative and forward looking initiatives in some areas. Let it do so now by recognizing positive advances in educational theory and practice relating to integration.

Certain boards of education in our province have become recognized models for their program of integrating students into the mainstream. We must share in their experience and avoid the costly and self-serving attempts at recreating the wheel in each of our school districts. For this reason, the ministry must provide leadership in the movement toward integrated education by recognizing and positively promoting what has already been shown to be possible and successful.

Madam Chairman: We have Mr. Johnston, followed by Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Some members of the committee have raised the question of whether or not the exceptional child and problems of segregation or integration are different from those of streaming in the rest of the system. I have been positing that we have a very hierarchical and a very segregated system in general.

We have the special-ed category which in many cases is not integrated, as you indicate. There is the basic level, in which often we actually have schools for people who are considered basic-level. We have the general level and then the advanced and enriched beyond that. Do you see that the same principles that you are talking about for the very exceptional child also apply within the school system itself, which is quite fragmented in terms of the secondary system, in streaming?

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Dr. Kazmierski: Let me answer that by saying that in our experience in both systems that have been streamed, or in our experience of children who have been integrated, the principles of integration that we are speaking of seem to work in streamed systems and in various streams and not. For instance, in a particular child's case,

precisely because the program is individualized, the school is able to make use of various classes and various programs that are in various streams, so to speak, so that child may have a class or part of a class that may be in the general stream or in a more advanced stream. Generally speaking, we are not really ready to criticize or discuss whether or not streaming is a good thing; we are more interested in precisely how we fit our children into whatever exists in the system as it is.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Tell me then what you see as the essential difference between a specialized school for the trainable retarded being separate and outside of the system, which you would argue against, and a school for vocational kids which is over separate from the rest of the school system?

Mr. Perks: One difference would be that, by and large, parents would have more of a choice in the former than in the case of the latter. I can certainly offer you only my personal opinion on the matter of streaming. I concur exactly with what Dr. Kazmierski said, but I think we can tend to focus too much on the differences between children and neglect the fact that there are a lot of similarities and commonalities.

In the specific case you pointed out, parental choice would be a large factor in how I would assess it. I think there is obviously a range of opinion among parents across Ontario as to what they specifically want for their children. I would say only that as far as I can see, all parents want the same thing, and that is good quality education. Some see the paths differently than perhaps we do. We see the path differently than others.

That said, my personal opinion is that we can concentrate far too much on the differences between the children than on the commonalities that they have. It is precisely the common ground between children with exceptionalities and regular children, and adults for that matter, that makes the difference in later life between kids who are capable of exploiting their potential for community living and kids who are not.

Mr. Barker: Perhaps I could add a further comment, which is that in the examples we are concerned with, with exceptional children, the streaming takes place at an extremely early age. What I perceive as one of the main differences in regard to the question you put about vocational schools and that sort of thing is that from the earliest days under a system as it sometimes operates, special education becomes a separate stream from the beginning of school which

results, which you see later in life, in the loss of community.

If you look at a child placed in a vocational school at the high school age, the benefits of growing up in the community have been derived, the roots are there. In the case of our children, from the age of five they are not part of that community. They do not have that opportunity for the social and academic development in the community. The choices do not become available to them later on, because of the nature of the education they receive at the earliest times.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Johnston, we have less than five minutes left. Would you mind if we went on to field one more question? We have Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Mahoney: First of all, let me say I think your brief is excellent and the points raised in it about the segregated child are really very valid, as is the fact that they are labelled. I have been through it personally, having my son segregated out of the community for three years in three different schools. It was very frustrating. We finally managed to convince the system that he should be integrated and now he is and everything is just fine.

The big argument from the professionals deals with the fact that there are certain specialists who can deal with a learning-disabled child or a child who is handicapped in some form and that individual may not be available in the integrated class; that you are putting undue pressure on the teacher, requiring massive retraining of teachers to deal with learning-disability or autistic kids or whatever level you are dealing with, putting them in there and requiring them to teach on a holistic basis. That is contrary to the trend, at least in Mississauga, which by the way is not as badly misspelled as you might have thought. You do spell the golf club name with a "u" on the end.

What is your response to those professionals who tend to want to stream themselves, actually, and therefore ultimately stream the kids?

Mr. Perks: Let me see if I can put a few words together in response. First of all, what is the role of a professional in any occupation, whether it is education or what have you? I would think it is to provide expert opinion on things and to advise people, especially to advise them on the range of options available. In many cases, that does not happen.

The range of options, including integrated placements, are not brought forth to parents in discussions about particular kids and instances. My discussions, just on a personal, parent basis, with a range of teachers and special education

professionals across the province—my wife and I have visited and talked about the special education requirements with many of them—are that special programming is obviously necessary. Where that programming can be provided in a segregated facility, it can also be provided in an integrated facility.

There are school boards that operate on that principle. There are schools and individual classes in some schools that operate on that principle. So our position is that special supports, special programming and specialists are absolutely necessary, but it is a case of where they are best delivered. Because of the history, I suppose, of education and special education in the province, it has been a natural development that those have been centred around either special classes or special schools, but there is nothing in my mind that stops us from moving those resources into the regular school system and taking maximum advantage of both worlds.

I have no doubt in my mind that good quality programming with special education resources can be delivered in a very natural setting in regular classrooms. The challenges posed by children are individual. I am not going to talk about how you can handle a child who is labelled LD or a child who is labelled physically handicapped. There is obviously a range of children, some with very challenging needs indeed, that is daunting to the average person, but my experience has been that school boards, schools, principals and teachers are handling these kids with these disabilities in a low-key, natural way and providing the support that is necessary to allow the child to participate in the regular school experience and to the satisfaction of parents involved. That tells me something. There is perhaps divided professional opinion on where it is best given, but there certainly is room for discussion there.

Mr. Barker: Could I just add a short comment on that? In my experience with my son as he has gone through the system, I have been impressed with the teachers he has had and the commitment they have had. The sense I have had about the use of specialists and people like that is that classroom teachers in the regular grades are prepared to work with exceptional children if they have the support. I think their concerns, as they have been expressed to me, are that they do not want a child dropped into the class, which creates additional problems for them per se. For example, if the specialists we now have spread around the system could be used to back up, support and provide help and guidance to the

regular classroom teacher, I have great faith that those teachers can do it.

Dr. Kazmierski: In my own experience in visiting quite a number of schools and school boards across Ontario, I have seen this is precisely the way it is being done. The individual child is not necessarily given a one-on-one teacher's aide or something, but the system actually uses all kinds of supports to help that individual teacher in the classroom to deal with the situation.

We have presented a model in the appendix that is used in the Waterloo County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, which may give you some kind of an example of how that school board is trying to deal with that particular situation. As I say, there are boards that are quite advanced in providing this type of education, so that it is not necessarily a completely "no" thing for them.

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Mr. Perks: May I just provide one comment, too? It has been my experience for sure that what it takes to make it work, first and foremost, is commitment in the classroom. I have, like Carl, the greatest faith that teachers in the classroom can provide the necessary educational and learning experience that these kids need.

They obviously cannot do it on their own. We certainly do not advocate just dumping kids in a class and hoping for the best. We certainly advocate planned programming with supports in the regular classroom.

Again, my experience has been that where the commitment of the teacher and the principal is there, that is the key ingredient to making it work on an individual child-by-child basis.

Mr. Mahoney: Just a closing comment. I suspect that the commitment should perhaps back up even further than that, at the board level. If the board is not going to provide those resources, the teachers will find themselves frustrated.

Mr. Perks: Yes, I agree.

Dr. Kazmierski: Absolutely.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Integration Action Group, Ottawa Chapter for appearing before us today and for your contribution to our committee.

Dr. Kazmierski: We were very pleased to be here.

Madam Chairman: Our next deputation is the Carleton Roman Catholic School Board. If you would come forward, please. If you would like to seat yourself before a microphone and

make yourself comfortable. Welcome to our committee. We have allocated one half hour for your presentation, including comments from the members.

When I was reading your brief last night, I noticed it was very comprehensive. I congratulate you on that. The only difficulty that might pose is that there would be absolutely no time for members' questions if you were to read it verbatim.

So if I could suggest that you might highlight certain points of your brief because you certainly have made many excellent points. Begin whenever you are ready. If you would just start by introducing yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

CARLETON ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. MacDonald: Very well. Our original brief was much longer. We cut it down. We are doing a summary of this one. We should be finished in about 10 minutes, so that we will have time for questions.

Madam Chairman: That will be perfect.

Mr. MacDonald: My name is C. B. MacDonald. I am chairman of the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board, English sector. With me today is Art Lamarche, one of our English trustees and also vice-chairman of the board. On my right is Mrs. MacNeil, one of our superintendents. Mr. D'Amico is on my left. They will be answering any questions you have.

I would also like to at this time introduce Dr. Crossan, who is with us; our director of education, Mr. Murphy; and finally, Mr. Revells who is the superintendent of English schools and John McGuinness who is also our superintendent of schools.

Mr. Mahoney: Is anybody at work?

Madam Chairman: I am sorry, gentlemen, you have just run out of time for your presentation.

Mr. MacDonald: We consider this work. We are pleased to have this opportunity to present a brief on behalf of the Carleton Roman Catholic School Board. We feel that this review of the education system is very timely as we are just now completing a very large curriculum implementation involving the extension of our school system to grade 12 and Ontario academic course.

The message in our brief can be summarized as follows: We believe in comprehensive community schools providing a full range of programs in a Catholic environment. We are doing this now.

We are proud of our programs but we feel that social equality does not exist because we do not have equal access to industrial and commercial assessment as other boards do. We have to do what other boards do but with less funding.

We feel that the Ministry of Education is sending mixed messages to the public; first, that we will meet the needs of all students, regardless of their academic ability; and second, that the Ontario graduation diploma guarantees that all students master a common high set of academic knowledge and skills.

We feel that the ministry should clearly communicate to the public that schools do attempt to meet the needs of all students, but that at the high school level the university-bound student masters a different set of academic knowledge and skills as compared to the non-university-bound student. Perhaps the high school diploma should indicate this difference.

At the elementary school level, the ministry's documents, such as *The Formative Years*, clearly outline the philosophy of education, but do not clearly detail a minimum set of learnings to be mastered by all students in Ontario at each grade level in the elementary school grades.

We recommend that this be done and that a common set of learning form about 50 per cent of each grade's curriculum, the remainder to be left to the school boards, so that we can deliver courses emphasizing local initiatives and programs. This would allow us to ensure that all students master the provincial curriculum and would lead to broader support and understanding of the school system on the part of parents and the community.

Having done this, we recommend that the minister co-ordinate the development of computer software which would allow schools to see that each individual student masters the grade requirements before proceeding, and that where promotion is recommended for personal and social reasons, students could proceed to the next grade with their grade-age cohorts and continue to master the curriculum in a logical continuum using the computer software. By the way, we are very pleased with the report, heard on the CBC last week, that benchmarks or standards would be prepared for the primary and junior divisions.

I would like to deal now with semestering. We make two recommendations about semestering. Because it offers some advantages to students—for example, they can graduate in four and a half years—and offers flexibility in timetabling schools, we recommend schools have the option of using the semestered or traditional method of

scheduling. Because it is not clear, according to the research, if there is any pedagogical advantage to semestering, our recommendation is that the ministry conduct research into this aspect of semestering.

Our recommendations on these topics are based on the following ideas: In Ontario, we have modified streaming. Students can move from the university-bound stream to the employment-after-grade-12 stream, but the process for doing so must be made easier. There should be much more integration of students into heterogeneous groups at the grade 9 and 10 level, and the curriculum renewal aspects of OSIS must be given time to be implemented and be emphasized by the ministry.

OSIS was published in 1984, and the main part of OSIS was curriculum renewal—for example, a complete redevelopment of all courses at three levels of difficulty—to meet the needs of all students. This was and is a massive project which is just now being completed. The new high school curriculum in every subject is just now being implemented. For example, science, technology, business, geography and physical ed guidelines will be completed this year.

These new courses must be implemented in a professional manner. New textbooks, in-service materials, etc., must be integrated into the system. These things are currently happening all across Ontario and promise to have a significant effect on standards and on the dropout rate.

Positive examples of the effect of OSIS initiatives include a university study released this year indicating that first-year university students are better prepared in language skills than ever before. The report attributed this to the new Ontario academic course in English which has just been implemented in Ontario.

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The tremendous increase in co-operative education enrolment promises to keep students in schools and to provide the motivation needed to have them graduate, and to graduate with higher levels of skill than in the past. Similar statements can be made about the development of computer skills. Many boards have task forces involved in improving the retention rate of high school students by focusing on general-level and basic-level programming. The Ministry of Education, for two years, has focused on student retention. The leadership, funding and service to principals, teachers and guidance counsellors are all appreciated and will improve student retention.

Many of the negative aspects of OSIS were identified quite soon after its distribution. For

example, the problems with general and basic courses and the inconsistent application of levels of difficulty to new courses were very apparent in schools. However, because formal reviews with action and feedback mechanisms were not part of the ministry's implementation plan for OSIS, the problems were not addressed. Another example is the lack of qualified French and technology teachers needed to teach the new OSIS curriculum. Many such difficulties could have been remediated with a proper annual review process.

I would like to summarize. Our recommendations are that time be allowed for the curriculum aspects of OSIS to be completed; and second, that the professional research be done to determine the effects of the new curriculum on the dropout rate and standards. We further recommend that no hasty changes be made until these two recommendations have been done and that an annual review of OSIS be made so that OSIS curriculum can be properly implemented and problems being encountered by schools and boards can be remedied. We recommend that there be much more integration of students into heterogeneous groups, as envisioned in OSIS, in grades 9 and 10. This can be effected if the designations of courses as to levels of difficulty, as outlined in OSIS, are followed.

Finally, we recommend that it be made easier for students to move between the streams. This concludes our presentation. On my right, Mrs. MacNeil, or on my left, Mr. D'Amico, will be pleased to field any questions you have.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. We very much appreciate the fact that you did keep your remarks so succinct as to leave time for members' questions.

Mrs. O'Neill: As you know, I often in the past have been known to speak publicly about the leadership that this board has taken in curriculum. That was in another role, and I certainly see those outstanding qualities carried forward this morning. My questions are on your comments on this area. On folio 6, I would like to ask you to say a little bit more about this, particularly your statement, "Many courses, including those in family studies, arts, physical education, business and technological studies are inappropriately designated as to level of difficulty," if I may begin there. I only have one other question. I feel your presentation is so specific that I would like to have some responses.

Mr. D'Amico: As originally envisioned by OSIS, there were very clear definitions about levels of difficulty and how they would be designated. For example, an advanced level was

an academic course leading to university preparation for a student. That was clearly outlined in OSIS. In the curriculum renewal aspects of OSIS, many, many courses have been developed. The ministry has produced literally hundreds of curriculum guidelines. Each guideline continues a number of courses at the advanced, general and basic levels. Many of those courses, we feel, have been incorrectly designated, especially in grades 9 and 10, as advanced-level courses. Let me give you two or three examples.

A keyboarding course is a practical, skilled, employment-oriented type of course. According to the OSIS definition, that is a general-level course, but across Ontario you will find in every school board in Ontario keyboarding courses called advanced courses. Similar statements can be made about grade 9 art, where a student is working with clay and various arts and crafts types of programs. Those, according to OSIS, are general-level courses. Across Ontario, you will find them labelled advanced. I mention physical education, family studies and a few others in the same vein.

If the intent of OSIS had been carried out, those would be general-level courses and every student in Ontario would be part of a heterogeneous grouping in at least half of the courses in grades 9 and 10 in the courses that I have designated, plus many, many others. Those students—and we have about 18 per cent of our students who end up at universities—that fairly narrow stream in grades 11, 12 and OAC level would then be streamed into strictly advanced-level courses. The point being made is, had the intent of OSIS been followed, we would have heterogeneous groupings to a very great extent in grades 9 and 10 and we would have an appropriate streaming in grades 11, 12 and 13.

Mrs. O'Neill: The boards obviously have done this then, if that was not the intent of OSIS. Is this because parents want their children in advanced classes and students want to be in advanced classes?

Mr. D'Amico: We are all to blame, both the boards and the ministry. Here is the ministry document. It is the science document. In the document and in many of the ministry documents, the courses that I have just described are allowed and authorized to be at the advanced level. Again, I would like to make the simplest example—typing, grade 9. That should be a general-level course throughout Ontario, yet the ministry authorizes that to be an advanced-level course or a general-level course. If we categorize those types of courses as advanced, the intent of

OSIS is not carried out in the ministry curriculum guidelines.

To take that a step further, the boards then take these guidelines, and we do our courses of study. We fell into the same trap. There was pressure on the system from parents and students to say, "My child will be in an advanced-level program." We fell into the trap and we allowed that to happen as well. There had to be a co-ordinated attack on the levels of difficulty, and it was lacking.

Madam Chairman: A supplementary from Mr. Mahoney on that point.

Mr. Mahoney: I just wonder, though, if in the category—take typing, keyboarding, that you have used—could there not be a general level and an advanced level?

Mr. D'Amico: The documents allow that to happen, yes. What I am suggesting is that had we not allowed that to happen, because of the OSIS definition—it is a skill, an employment-oriented type of course—we would have had heterogeneous groupings in grade 9 across our province.

Mr. Mahoney: Okay.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am sorry, you are going to have to be more specific about heterogeneous groupings. Are you saying that we would have a general-level typing or keyboarding and an advanced level?

Mr. D'Amico: No, we would have a general-level keyboarding in grade 9 in every high school in Ontario, and all students could be mixed in that class. They would master keyboarding skills—all the students.

Mrs. O'Neill: Are you saying that when you get to grade 11, there would be more people who would be in the general level, where they should be? I am trying to be very, very practical, because I want to understand what you are saying.

Mr. D'Amico: Sure. We are saying two things. At the grades 9 and 10 level, we would have many students taking general-level courses and some students, a fairly small percentage, taking the strictly tough, high-standard, advanced-level courses, perhaps in English, math and science. We do have a stream there which we would have to have.

Most of the kids would be mixed in heterogeneous courses. At the grades 11, 12 and 13 level, students would have explored and found out where they are going. They would have said: "Yes, I am going to industry after grade 12. Therefore, I am going to take the computer applications course and all those other employment-entry kinds of general-level courses," because

that is what general level is designed for, to lead into employment after grade 12. They would head that way. They would self-stream in grades 11 and 12.

The other category, the 20 per cent who end up in university, at that point, in grade 11, would self-stream themselves into the tougher academic courses, physics, chemistry, calculus, algebra, etc.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you very much.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you very much for a fascinating report. That is the first time I have heard that kind of analysis on a curriculum basis for how more heterogeneous classes in grades 9 and 10 could have been accomplished under the OSIS document. It is quite an interesting concept.

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Just as an aside, under item 19, you say that annual dropout statistics should be gathered. I wonder if you would add to that the notion of re-entry statistics being done at the same time, because surely one of the difficulties we have now is with what dropout really means.

Mr. D'Amico: Yes, I would agree with that. We do have some students who probably should drop out for a year or two and then come back as they motivate themselves to become educated. We should do that. It is very difficult to arrive at true dropout statistics, as you are well aware, because kids move from school to school, board to board and program to program.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You have made no comments, as some Catholic presenters and others have, since you have no one from the elementary panel here, on the suggestion that perhaps the strict grade determinations in the early part of the primary level, as some people have said, from kindergarten or grade 1 through grade 3, should be done away with and that in those areas the whole notion of promotion or holding back kids is missing the point of their development and that kind of thing.

Have you any comments around that level of things? Have you done much thinking about that?

Mrs. MacNeil: Just to comment on that, one of the ways in which we are going in this whole area of promotion and evaluating students is to look at the learning outcomes that are expected rather than a particular grade or mark, if you wish.

Particularly in the primary division, student development is not as clear-cut as it is later on, and very often in the kindergarten program of 20 months, it does take those 20 months for the

maturation and development to take place. We feel it is much more accurate to state the learning outcomes at the end of a particular division than to be very specific with marks for reading or something that may change with maturation and development and so on. It is for that reason that the evaluation instruments we have developed in the area of report cards and the other ways we communicate to parents are based on learning outcomes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: My final question is on streaming and what your present practice is. It was not clear from what you were saying. Do you have the three streams operating within your system at the secondary level? Do you have them in separated classes or separated schools?

Mr. D'Amico: We believe in the community comprehensive high school. In each of our high schools, we have the general, basic and advanced programs. We have them all. We are attempting to build the general-level designations to a larger enrolment base so that we are forcing on our system heterogeneous groupings in grades 9 or 10. We are running into many roadblocks there because of parent attitudes and because of the ministry documents allowing some of those. We are fighting our own teachers in some of those battles.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What have you done around transitional programs? We have been hearing from people that the streams seem to be as tightly bound now as they were pre-OSIS and that it is very hard for people to actually move from one stream to another.

Mr. D'Amico: We are doing very little in that area. One of our recommendations revolves around the transition courses being made more available. In OSIS, there is just a one-liner on transition courses. If I could reflect on the annual review process that we recommend for OSIS, things like that could be clarified and strengthened in OSIS if an annual review had been done each year of the last four or five years.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is a very practical point. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: We will have a final brief question. Mr. McGuinty.

Mr. McGuinty: A brief?

Madam Chairman: A question from Mr. McGuinty with a very brief preamble.

Mr. McGuinty: I especially appreciated the first three pages of your statement. It is a very concise statement of the way education has evolved in the past years and the concerns that some people have about the confusion that exists.

With regard to Hall-Dennis, I think Macbeth would say, "We have scotch'd the snake, not killed it." It still has lingering effects and, I think, for good in some ways.

I really cannot understand when, at the bottom, you recommend:

"That the Ontario government and the Ministry of Education decide whether the secondary school graduation diploma and program is to be based on: (a) a philosophy of equal opportunity which meets the overall individual physical, intellectual, emotional and social needs and development of all students, or (b) the acquisition of a common, high level of academic knowledge and skills for a limited number of students."

I do not see that these are mutually exclusive. There is no doubt that what we have done is have a lesser fallout rate from our school system at the present time than we had in years past. At the same time, in the disturbing statistics brought forth by the community colleges just this week, 37 per cent of the students admitted are considered to be functionally illiterate, and I have had students come into university classes functionally illiterate. There is no doubt that we have to try to clear up that confusion for industry, parents, employers, universities and so forth, but I do not see that (a) and (b) here are mutually exclusive.

Mr. D'Amico: I think if you take the typical industrialist in Ontario, he has an image of our high school graduate, and that image is that the student has mastered to a very high degree commonly accepted standards of a student going to university.

Mr. McGuinty: That is a fair assumption.

Mr. D'Amico: That is an image they have in their minds. On the other hand, as you heard from the last group, we are trying to meet the needs of a very large range of students, from the trainably retarded to the dependently handicapped to the gifted. You cannot have all students meeting the same high standards of academic knowledge. We are not doing that. We have two standards. We have a very high standard of students going to university and we have a second standard, a standard of those students who are meeting 30 credits to the best of their ability and deserving a high school diploma. Some segments of the public do not understand that, not all of the public.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. McGuinty. In fact, you were quite brief, and we appreciate that.

I would very much like to thank the Carleton Roman Catholic School Board for coming before us today. You have certainly added some insight to the material we are studying, and we appreciate it.

Mr. MacDonald: We thank you for the privilege. Incidentally, I think your committee is doing a tremendous job and will continue.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. It is not often that we get accolades, so we particularly appreciate it.

Mr. Mahoney: I hope Hansard got that.

Madam Chairman: Yes. Would you like to repeat that, please?

Mr. MacDonald: I will write it to you.

Madam Chairman: The next deputation is the Carleton Board of Education. Could you come forward, please. Are the members of the Carleton Board of Education who are making the presentation here?

Mr. Brennan: We are assembling.

Madam Chairman: Good morning. Welcome to our committee.

Mr. MacLennan: We have the key person coming.

Madam Chairman: I think this is what is called an entrance. Welcome to our committee this morning. As I mentioned to the previous deputations, we have allocated half an hour for your presentation. I notice it is quite substantial, so if you feel the need to highlight parts of it instead of reading the brief per se, please feel free. The members have had an opportunity to read your brief in advance.

Mr. Hansen: We will question them on the brief then.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is not a standardized test, is it?

Mr. Mahoney: We do not like standardized tests.

Mr. Hansen: On page 5, what is your response?

Madam Chairman: We hope you will allow time for questions at the end. Please begin whenever you are ready. Please start by introducing yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

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CARLETON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Hansen: My name is Hal Hansen. I am chairman of the Carleton Board of Education. On my right is Lyle MacLennan, our director of

education, and on my left is John Brennan, a principal of continuing education. He is in charge of all of our continuing education programs under the director.

We thank you very much for the opportunity to participate in the process and to provide our board's view of your mandate and the future of education in terms of Ontario vis-à-vis philosophy and goals.

The presentation this morning is restricted to the criteria that the committee has established and deals with topics that flow from the original report that we submitted to you in June. The first phase of the report focuses on our view of the purpose of education. In short, we differ to some extent with the current emphasis that seems to be coming out of Toronto with regard to what we think is an overemphasis on education for the workplace.

It seems that grants and programs and so on are all related to getting children through the school system as quickly as possible with a few skills and into the job market, and therefore success is imminent. That places the emphasis on an industrial-age approach and, as a result, detracts from the concern of the individual student.

Our mission statement, as a board, is focused on the individual and the growth of that individual through a wide variety of courses and methods, so that the individual becomes a thinker, an independent person who, going through the system, acquires skills and knowledge and is able to function in society. In short, we place more of a balance on education for living as compared to education for a living. Essentially, we believe the stretching of minds is the purpose of education.

We focus our attention in primary and secondary education on the ability of the student to read, write and compute to the best of his or her ability. It is equally important, we think, that our students learn how to learn, how to adapt to new conditions, how to plan intelligently and how to assume responsible roles in society. They should be encouraged to be creative, to appreciate artistic endeavour and to develop physical fitness and good health. There must be clear direction to help each person develop a positive self-concept that will enable him or her to face the future with confidence. Each individual is unique and the educational experiences for each pupil should also be unique.

I remind the committee that with regard to the health and physical fitness aspect, Ontario is the only province in the country that does not have a statement on record by the minister with regard to

the benefits of quality, daily physical education. The minister was reminded of this by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario in June, and by myself as well. We are still waiting for his statement to send a message to the population and the educational systems that this is in fact a mandate for the future. With all of the issues in society focused on health education, it seems only logical that our students should be fulfilling that as one of the mandates in our system.

Essentially, students should be literate: physically literate, culturally literate and socially literate. If we take these goals in mind and place the focus, as we do, on the individual student and the learning opportunities that are available, we in the board think that we try our best to accomplish these goals and that each individual effectively is pursuing them and is accomplishing them.

So we do not put much weight on the philosophy that is expressed by some people with regard to: "We must have people certified. At the end of a process, you have this; therefore you are okay. You now have accomplished all of the goals of Ontario education, so you can function in society." Rather than a certified individual, we seek a person who is a self-directed, independent learner.

In our previous report we recommended:

That the individual be the focus of attention.

That we promote initiative, creativity and entrepreneurial skills in education through local accountability—and I emphasize "local accountability."

That the present list of goals be clarified by the addition of a brief mission statement which balances processes and outcomes. Those goals that are on the plaques of all the boardrooms are very nice but they are also very wordy. It would be nice to be a little bit more succinct and create a mission statement that focuses on the individual child and what the individual board is doing to accomplish education for that individual child.

That we continue to move forward to an emphasis on individual excellence.

That, in effect, we prepare students for the information age.

In order to implement all of these, a number of factors must be considered. We focus on the four factors as indicated earlier.

In terms of streaming, conventional wisdom and practice say that streaming students into more homogeneous groups should permit more efficient and productive delivery of education. In narrowing the breadth of the ability range of a group through streaming, the teacher is able to

serve more students more effectively and still cater to the smaller individual differences within the group.

This occurs informally in the elementary grades by having the groups in the same classroom at the same time. Pupils can be moved from group to group as interest and ability permit. It is somewhat more formalized in the secondary grades, as students usually are grouped into self-contained classes which are designated advanced, general or basic level. Mobility is usually achieved through a formal adjustment in the student's timetable.

Our board takes considerable pride in its very high rate of student retention. The annual dropout rate in our board is 4.2 per cent. That is going back for the last three years now. If we multiply the 4.2 per cent by four years of high school, we come out with 16-point-something per cent, which is considerably below the current percentages that are thrown around by various people emanating from various spots in the province, anywhere from a 30 per cent to a 60 per cent dropout range. For the record, there are jurisdictions in this province that do have a different approach and different statistics, so one does not want to taint the entire educational system with the data that exist in one or two particular areas.

It has been further determined that 83 per cent of our grade 9 students earn the high school diploma, compared to the provincial average of 67 per cent. We as a board attribute this success in part to high community expectations and in part to our ability to provide unique experiences for each individual through various programs that we have.

For example, Sir Guy Carleton Secondary School is our vocational program school. We have various programs for the gifted students at elementary and secondary levels and special education classes for students requiring learning disability or social adjustment programs. All of these, plus the availability of most academic programs at the advanced and general levels of difficulty, enable the board to adjust to common needs and to individualize the educational experiences for each secondary student.

This is being achieved despite difficulties caused by the high cost of small classes and the wide geographical area that we serve. We have 1,100 square miles. There are eight municipalities in our jurisdiction, five of which are rural townships. I think we are the largest busing board in the province, with 30,000 of our 43,000 students on buses every day. When you consider

the range of our jurisdiction, it is a little difficult sometimes in terms of financial constraints.

The priority given by the province to the funding level for public education is a matter of concern to us. Last year, for example, because of the current formula that exists, we lost \$6 million in grants that we had anticipated, and we got the news only a few days before our budget came down. We had to adjust our budget in order to lay more taxes on taxpayers because of the loss of grants.

On the one hand, if the ministry is dictating that we should have A, B and C, which infer lower pupil-teacher ratios, etc., then obviously with the responsibility should flow the funds. Everything cannot be turned over to the local ratepayer. In our particular jurisdiction, where 80 per cent of our ratepayers are residential in terms of assessment, that is a real, negative impact in terms of education, as compared to jurisdictions that have a higher commercial-industrial assessment.

But not getting into the Macdonald commission at all, where we favour regional pooling naturally, in terms of the implementation of curriculum and programs—

Mr. Jackson: Everybody else does, you might as well.

Mr. Hansen: I thought I would get that in. It is a concern to us. You cannot deliver unless you have the resources to deliver. That is a concern.

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We take advantage of the ability to individualize as many programs as we can. We exploit various opportunities to assist students in integration. For example, we have students in learning disability classes, social adjustment classes, intellectually gifted programs and other exceptional students who are integrated, where appropriate, into mainstream programs for lengthy periods of time with a high degree of success. Still others are assisted by elementary and secondary school special education resource units.

Those who express reservations about streaming usually focus on the labelling of students and the lack of mobility between streams. While students in advanced-level and basic-level streams have traditionally been well served, there is a perception that students in the general-level stream have been somewhat neglected. Over the past eight years, we have spent considerable effort and resources not only in studying general-level programs but in developing and implementing action plans to improve programs for these students.

Such plans include differences in teaching approaches, practical applications and alternative evaluation methods which allow for differences in learning styles. Notwithstanding these efforts, it is the view of our board that there is a major problem in the area of teacher training as it presently exists in the various faculties of education across the province, because the people who come out of here and are involved in the teaching profession we do not think are adequately prepared to deliver the education to the various levels of programming that exist.

I would point out that we are very happy that we benefited from ministry grants. We got two grants this past year—I believe they were \$75,000 each for two of our high schools, A. Y. Jackson and J. S. Woodsworth—in order to focus on this particular topic, the identification of potential dropout students, the arrangement of different kinds of programs and different methods of delivery; in other words, how we can retain students in the programs and better deliver general education to our general-level students.

The transition between streams, particularly from the general to the advanced level of difficulty, has posed some problems for a number of students. Normally this is achieved through summer courses or consecutive courses at the same grade level in semestered schools. The provision for transition courses in OSIS, while not widely implemented, we think is a sound program and should be implemented on a more widely based approach.

For example, 30 to 60 hours of a course can easily make the transition point for any number of students from a general-level to an advanced-level course. Based on our experience, that is what is happening. The students take 30 to 60 hours in the summertime and immediately they are into an advanced-level course. English or mathematics are the two examples. So contrary to what Mr. Radwanski said, it is our position that we favour grouping for all of those reasons that we have stated.

We do not agree with grade promotion. It is anachronistic, inappropriate and any other adjectives that you want to put to it. In short, we favour subject promotion, because our philosophy is based on the individualized approach to education for students. One of the best ways of achieving that is by means of subject promotion.

At the elementary level, various things are being achieved in terms of combined grades. Others are effective subject scheduling in adjacent grades and transition classes which assist some pupils in making an adjustment between

kindergarten and grade 1, for example, or between elementary and middle schools. It is also important to note that many students receive assistance and support from our special education resource units.

Fourteen Carleton elementary schools are moving towards an integration of program in the primary division where we group all the students in kindergarten to grade 3, or grades 1 to 3, together as a unit. So it is an integration of the primary level of education. The students stay there and they progress on their individual bases.

You may have students who are in grade 1 and three quarters of the way through the year are doing grade 2 work, so that by the end of the three years or two and a half years or whatever the case may be, they are flowing into the junior division, which is grades 4 to 6. That integration of 14 of our elementary schools is working very well and will undoubtedly expand in the future.

It is an opportunity of a different delivery mode. Rather than the traditional grade, grade, grade and pass all this and you move on, this focuses on subject promotion from all grade levels' points of view.

In terms of student evaluation, we have a number of concerns. They are centred on standards, the criteria used for evaluation, the methods employed, the fairness of evaluation and the consistency of standards across the jurisdiction. We have done extensive research within our board jurisdiction, over the last eight years particularly. For example, Professors Fu and Edwards have done studies in math achievement on a regular basis annually in grades 3, 6 and 9, and then we used the Queen's University language arts study for grades 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8. The data that have been yielded demonstrate that our students have consistently high levels of achievement in these areas.

Further, these studies have developed for us standardized tests with board norms, which have proven to be valuable instruments for staff. Participation in provincial, national and international studies such as IEA Mathematics, also confirms that our students achieve well compared to pupils in other boards, provinces and countries.

We have implemented board-wide evaluation in Ontario academic course English, grade 12 general English and grade 10 advanced math. The benefits of this approach go far beyond merely having consistent criteria by which students are evaluated, even though this is in itself also desirable. Tremendous professional growth and development have occurred within

our teaching staff as a result of these activities in both the development and preparation of these evaluation instruments and then in the group marking activities which naturally follow.

Such benefits can occur when this kind of activity is carried on at the local rather than the provincial level. In short, there is a commitment to a system of education. The local jurisdiction: the teachers are involved in the process, all of the staff are involved and as a result, the parents get relevant feedback about their student's progress. Staff are committed to the benefits of evaluation. We have standards board wide and so people can make adjustments in terms of, "My child got X per cent in this subject and the board-wide standard is Y per cent." So at least everybody knows the relative performance levels that can occur.

I emphasize the commitment and the fact that local autonomy is needed in order to emphasize that.

We as a board support the concept of subject promotion in preference to grade promotion and also the local development of evaluation criteria and instruments, both in the interests of maintaining standards and of staff professional development.

In terms of semestering, we have three schools that are fully semestered. Twelve other high schools operate on the traditional September-to-June format and two schools in Carleton are partially semestered. Partially means that in grades 9 and 10 there is a regular program, then 11, 12, and what we used to call grade 13, are semestered. It gives the students an opportunity to get accustomed and oriented to high school activities and then, when they are a little bit more mature, they can flow into the opportunities available in the partially semestered program.

Co-op ed in our jurisdiction has witnessed phenomenal growth over the last several years. I believe we have about 600 businesses involved in our co-op program and hundreds of students who take part in it at all levels of opportunity or progress—general level, basic level and advanced level. That is expanding. We have great co-operation in this area among the boards in terms of our learning foundation and that generates a sensitivity in the business community and provides openings for our students and staff in terms of co-op education. As a matter of fact, the theme of Education Week last year locally was exactly that: co-op ed and the connection between education and business. It is a super experience and it is going very well in our community.

It is our position that local boards retain the autonomy to have this range of delivery models at our disposal so that we can individualize programs and provide the opportunity for students to progress at their own rate and still achieve skills and knowledge that society demands as well as the individuals demand.

We would suggest that classes ranging from 20 minutes to perhaps two hours and credits offered at both factions and multiples of the traditional single credit would go a long way. For example, one little idea we are still thinking about in terms of the director and his staff in various alternative delivery modes is that possibly in the future, along these modular delivery lines, you may end up in geographical areas where students go to more than one high school. If courses are offered two miles down the road by one school and by another school somewhere else, the student theoretically can be registered at one school but take courses at other schools in order to fulfil the mandate that is required by OSIS, quite apart from the individual delivery.

Without that flexibility locally, we cannot achieve that as a board, so we favour that local autonomy and the various delivery models that we are trying and that other boards are trying, and that we can maintain and expand in the future.

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In terms of OSIS, that acronym which has been with us for several years, we cannot overemphasize, do not tamper with the implementation of OSIS, please. It is enough trouble trying to get it implemented. We have had our first graduates. Leave it alone, let the bugs work out. There are guidelines that have not even been created yet for all of the OSIS requirements, there are phases of OSIS that have not been implemented fully. Give it a chance to work out the bugs. Take the suggestions of boards and educators and professionals who exist in our system as to how you can improve it. Do not throw the baby out with the bath oil, so to speak—or the water, whatever that expression is.

Mrs. O'Neill: You are too old to remember that phrase.

Mr. Hansen: Probably.

I want to emphasize that there are some recommendations in OSIS that have not received implementation. One of them is the transition courses to facilitate level changes. I referred to that earlier in terms of the 30-hour and 60-hour concept, the modular timetabling and so on. I think we have to take the opportunity to implement that and see how well it works and what modifications there are.

Various forms like house systems, home rooms, having students group with a teacher for two or three subjects to give them consistency and so on all allow for that flexibility in order to have students adjust and feel good about being in school and being involved in learning. Without those kinds of alternatives that exist and are being tried, we are not going to know what the level of effectiveness of OSIS is and can be. We would also like to think that we can generate opportunities to present subject themes relevant to what we call real world issues, such as the environment, space studies, sports and world health concerns.

As an example, our most recent high school, West Carleton High School, which we opened this fall, is an environmental studies high school. The whole theme of that high school is environmental studies. It was designed thoroughly in terms of the criteria for environment. We have an outdoor education centre attached to that school. We have 40 or 50 acres as part of the site for that high school, which will be used by the entire jurisdiction for the benefit of the community, quite apart from students in our school system and other jurisdictions. Without that opportunity to try out those kinds of approaches, I think education would not be well served and certainly the student would not be well served.

The whole area of fast-tracking generates a lot of discussion. On the one hand, the school system feels the pressure. On the other hand, there are concerns about overloaded curriculum. The student gets in and, all of a sudden, when you stack up all the prerequisites, there is nothing left. Like, "What do I do here?" All they do is run through the courses and get all the prerequisites and then, all of a sudden, they get a diploma. When do you stop to smell the roses kind of idea? That is a potential disadvantage to OSIS.

We offer a lot of French immersion programs. I think you people will realize that we are one of the boards that a lot of other boards in the country may have used in terms of French immersion delivery. One of the requirements we have to promote the continuation of French as a second language in terms of our high school students is to obtain 12 credits during their high school years in addition to their high school diploma. If you are going to make all these adjustments or potential adjustments to OSIS, students will be deprived of opportunities such as that, will not have access to those kinds of opportunities.

Quite frankly, we think that the status quo should be maintained at the present time and that we should continue to monitor and implement pilot projects in order to better deliver education

to students at the various grade levels or subject area levels.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate our position that the individual student must remain the primary focus of the educational system. Quite specifically, this board believes that preparation for the workforce is far too narrow a mandate. We support a holistic approach that encourages initiative and creativity and that equips our students with those skills, abilities and attitudes which will lead to a fulfilling and enriching lifetime.

Specifically, and I itemize these—

Madam Chairman: Mr. Hansen, I am sorry to interrupt. I just wanted you to know that we have only five minutes left. You have presented a thoroughly excellent brief. I do not know whether you want to go into your summary of recommendations, which you have basically covered in your brief, or whether you would prefer to allow time for members' questions.

Mr. Hansen: They are itemized on the last two pages. There are nine specific recommendations. I thought we had half an hour, as you stated at the beginning. According to my watch, there are 15 minutes left. However, we are now open to questions.

Madam Chairman: I am sorry. It was in fact before 11:20 a.m. when I called up the group.

Mr. Hansen: Fine. No problem. The recommendations are there. We are open to questions.

Madam Chairman: I am very reluctant to do that, because your brief was simply excellent.

Mr. Hansen: I appreciate that.

Madam Chairman: I have one point of information. You mentioned, at the very beginning, that you are somewhat alarmed by the message that seemed to be coming out of Toronto, that children should be educated to go into the business world, and that in Carleton you had the attitude that education is for living as opposed to being for a living.

I would like to reassure you that this is the message we have been getting in Toronto from numerous groups. There were a few selected business groups that brought forward the other message. It got a lot of publicity, but, by far and large, I think I would be safe in saying that the message we have been getting has been very similar to what you have given us today.

Mr. Hansen: Fine. That is reassuring.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think it is an excellent brief, I am really pleased with it and I will not respond to the word "entrepreneurial" at all. I promise I am not going to do that.

Mr. Jackson: In the context of the chairman's comments, I think it is being thought of as alternative education.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is really an excellent brief and there are many things in it I would love to pursue with you but we do not have much time. The one thing I would like to pursue, if I could, is the assumption that the basic-level streaming is working out fine, which is basically what you put in there. A number of us have really serious concerns about who gets streamed into basic. There are many national studies and international studies which show it is kids from working-class families and a few selected ethnic groups who tend up to end up there in the large part. Many of us are concerned that when streaming takes place the rights of choice and involvement are really taking place.

What I want to ask you is whether you have done any studies locally of the socioeconomic makeup of the kids who go into your vocational stream, as compared with the rest of the streams, and whether there has been any arm's-length sort of educational aptitude testing done just to make sure, again, that some of those concerns in the literature are not founded in your specific instance?

Mr. Hansen: I will ask our director to respond in terms of the details.

Mr. MacLennan: That is a very interesting question, Mr. Johnston. We approach our basic-level program from the point of view of academic ability. It has nothing to do with socioeconomic background. Our criterion is that the students must be in the range of an IQ of 85 per cent or below. We have done that very specifically, because it is not just an opportunity for the students who are not succeeding in the general level and/or the advanced level to be "dumped" into the basic-level school. Our criteria are based on the student's ability, their success rates in the past and to see to it that program is most appropriate for them.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Have you done a sociological run of any sort to see what the socioeconomic base is for those people who have gone in there as well? I can understand how that might be the assumption, but if it then ends up that 85 per cent or whatever are from a certain socioeconomic level, there are some real questions about IQ aptitude testing as the sole means of looking at it. Have you ever done those tests?

Mr. MacLennan: I do not think we have specifically looked at the socioeconomic grouping to see whether in fact we have students

coming from a specific work class or what have you. We have a fairly homogeneous socioeconomic group inside of Carleton to start with, but if you take a look at the group that is there, I think you would find that the students are far-ranging in terms of their backgrounds—socioeconomic, multicultural and what have you—but it is an area that we probably should look at.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would be fascinated to see it, because I have not seen one study which has not shown a huge weighting for lower socioeconomic participation in vocational streams worldwide. I would be very interested to see that this was not the case.

Mr. MacLennan: Okay.

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Mr. McGuinty: First, I thank the chairman of the Carleton Board of Education for his admirable restraint in not elaborating on his comments on financing. It would be very tantalizing if we could have the different people who present different briefs, get together to discuss their conflicting points of view or different points of view.

We had this morning, just earlier, what I found to be a very satisfying and convincing brief put forth by a group called the Integration Action Group, a group of parents. These people are not professional educators. All they could bring to bear upon the matter are the dictates of parental common sense. They are very much concerned about the implications of streaming. I tend to agree with them.

It states here at the bottom of an unnumbered page, "Conventional wisdom and practice says that streaming students"—conventional wisdom; I wonder what convention? It is not conventional wisdom; it is something that really is a relatively recent phenomenon—"into more homogeneous groups should permit more efficient and productive delivery of education. In narrowing the breadth of the ability range of a group through streaming, the teacher is able to serve more students more effectively and still cater to the smaller individual differences within the group." I do not know what that means, but I will not ask you to elaborate on it. I will ask you to turn to the next page.

You state that the board "exploits many opportunities to assist students by means of integration. For example, students in learning disability classes, social adjustment classes, programs for the intellectually gifted and other exceptional students are integrated where appropriate into mainstream programs for lengthy periods of time with a high degree of success."

Later on you refer to the integration of students in kindergarten to grade 3, getting back to the old one-room school idea or even, as I recall from my high school days, simply seating us in order of stupidity.

Mr. Hansen: Hopefully things have improved since then.

Mr. McGuinty: There seems to be a difference in the two statements here. On one hand you say that by conventional wisdom—again, I do not know what convention asserts that—the practice should permit more efficiency. Then you go on to say you find integration very effective in other areas. I am a little confused on that point. Are you for or against streaming or for it only in certain cases?

Mr. Hansen: I do not think one can be in favour or not in favour, as you would like to have us make a statement along those lines, for any number of reasons. We have found, on the advice of our special education advisory committee, which is made up of elected trustees and parents from the various groups in our community, that quite frankly, in certain cases for certain children integration is the best thing that is going to happen and is good for them. As a result, we have a lot of opportunities where in fact those students are integrated in one form or another. In other cases, it is not appropriate for students to be integrated.

Therefore, the judgement of the educators, the parents and all the consultation processes that go along in terms of placing children with special needs in the education system is abided by. For us to say flatly that we are in favour of integration for everybody is not correct. I do not think it should be a statement that one would want to make because it depends on the individual child and the individual needs that have to be satisfied for that child. That is the position of our board.

Mr. McGuinty: Would the parent have the option of choosing?

Mr. Hansen: Within the existing legislation, you are familiar with the processes that one goes through in terms of identifying, placing and monitoring the progress of students.

Mr. McGuinty: Supposing I had a bright child—the child took after its mother—and I wanted that child not in the advanced, gifted, enriched, but in the general, relating to the world that he is going to live in for ever after. Would I have that option?

Mr. Hansen: If you were a taxpayer in our public system, we would provide you with the option.

Madam Chairman: I would again like to thank the Carleton Board of Education. I am sorry, Mr. Sterling. I did not see you. Please proceed.

Mr. Sterling: I would like to make a comment. First, I would like to thank the board for bringing forward a brief today. Your board probably has been a leader in the whole province in terms of commenting on provincial policy and different pieces of legislation, along with our Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board, which has also participated very much in that because a lot of changes have occurred in this area.

But I would only hope that some of the people who would oppose streaming would take the time to go out and visit Sir Guy Carleton Secondary School and live the experience of that particular school, because the enthusiasm of the staff and the general happiness of the student body should really be felt by anybody who has the idea that these particular students, who are streamed in a fashion, are in any way suffering in their educational environment. Sir Guy Carleton, in my view, is an example of where students of more limited abilities in some areas can succeed. They can become the head boy, they can become the president of the class, they can become first in the class in subjects, etc.

While in theory some of the things that Radwanski puts together have some philosophical underpinnings that you can reach out for, I really think that a lot of students in the area that I represent would be undersold if they did not have a facility like Sir Guy Carleton.

Madam Chairman: I do not know if you have any final comments before you go, but we have certainly appreciated hearing from you today. This is the final time I am going to thank you for coming.

Mr. Hansen: Just as a concluding statement, as a matter of interest we started to ask our ratepayers of all different levels—the 60 per cent of taxpayers who are without children in the system and parents of various grade levels and so on—we did a massive survey of essentially how well we are doing as a school board for our jurisdiction, and the report card was quite favourable, in our view.

Mr. McGuinty: Are you referring to the election?

Mr. Hansen: The overall percentage of 85 per cent satisfaction with what we are doing as a board with the resources we have was the response from a random survey throughout by an

independent agency and so on. Of the various groupings within our jurisdiction, 75 per cent of the adults who, in effect, are taxpayers felt that we were doing a good job in preparing students for the future; that we were doing a pretty good job of preparing them for the workplace and that we were challenging the students. Eighty per cent thought that the students were trying to think, or at least the purpose was there, that they were actually having to think about things and that, in fact, we were providing the basics, as we know them, very well.

I might add that 95 per cent indicated that our teachers are caring and socially responsible people who really want to help the kids. The perception by students, by parents and by people in the community without children in the school was that we are a system that cares about the individuals.

So whatever we want to say about surveys, Gallup polls and so on, I point that out. We use it as baseline data to identify areas where we would like to improve the percentage or we say, "We are doing pretty well here, but we are a little weak there; therefore, what are we going to do to improve it?" It is an ongoing thing that we are attempting to do.

The committee, in its function of finding out from various groups in Ontario society about the various pros and cons of education, in effect satisfies a similar form of feedback or survey, and the results that you accrue over your time will, one hopes, be synthesized so that ultimately the kids will benefit in the future.

Madam Chairman: I must say, Mr. Hansen, that you are one of the few boards we have heard from that have actually tabulated statistics on the dropout rate. I personally would just like to say that, from your very innovative concepts and your attitude of challenge for the students, I think you are doing education in Ontario a fine service.

Mr. Mahoney: Not only that, but we have found someone with an ability to handle Mr. McGuinty. Just ignore his comments.

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Interjections.

Mr. Hansen: I provided the opportunity for him to switch taxes.

Madam Chairman: If you really want a treat and a challenge, stay tuned to my French.

Nous accueillons aujourd'hui un autre groupe qui va faire une présentation en français, la Fédération des élèves du secondaire franco-ontarien. Venez vous installer devant le micro, s'il vous plaît. Notre comité vous souhaite de

nouveau la bienvenue. Vous avez 30 minutes pour votre présentation.

Now, to the relief of all committee members and people present, I will switch to English. We have several members who I think will ask their questions in French but probably several others who will save your ears as well.

As I mentioned, welcome to the committee. Please begin whenever you are ready. Would you start by introducing yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard?

FÉDÉRATION DES ÉLÈVES DU SECONDAIRE FRANCO-ONTARIEN

Mlle DeCourville Nicol: Bonjour. Je m'appelle Isabelle DeCourville Nicol et je suis présidente de la Fédération des élèves du secondaire franco-ontarien. À ma droite est Guy-Marc Dumais, qui est le secrétaire général de la FESFO.

J'aimerais mentionner tout d'abord qu'il y a eu quelques changements et ajouts au document qui vous a été remis précédemment.

Bien que nous ayons cosigné un mémoire présenté devant ce comité par les organismes francophones en éducation, la FESFO a voulu vous entretenir d'un problème spécifique qui nous touche de près: la formation en leadership, d'une part, et son financement, d'autre part.

Depuis près de dix ans, la Fédération des élèves du secondaire franco-ontarien articule un programme de formation centré sur le module FEL, ou formation en leadership, développé pour répondre spécifiquement aux besoins des élèves francophones.

La FESFO offre ses stages FEL aux écoles sur demande. En moyenne, dix stages sont offerts par an et ils rejoignent un peu plus d'une vingtaine d'élèves à chaque occasion. Nous disposons, dans la matière, de documents pédagogiques fort bien élaborés et de méthodes d'animation dynamiques et reconnues.

Au cours d'un stage de formation en leadership, le participant aborde des thèmes tels que: écoute active, dynamique de groupe, prise de décisions, résolution de conflits, etc. Les stages FEL ont pour objectif d'aider les élèves à mieux comprendre leurs forces et leurs faiblesses afin de développer leur plein potentiel de leader. Des techniques d'animation, de planification et d'organisation d'activités sont étudiées au cours de ces stages.

Les besoins relatifs à la formation et au développement d'aptitudes personnelles chez les jeunes sont reconnus de façon unanime, tant par les dirigeants scolaires et les responsables

gouvernementaux que par les élèves directement concernés. La formation en leadership revêt une importance de premier plan au sein même du ministère de l'Éducation. Les animateurs culturels et des professeurs de presque toutes les écoles sollicitent la tenue de stages ou de camps de formation en leadership pour les élèves de leurs institutions.

On note qu'une telle formation, lorsque offerte à des groupes choisis, provoque un effet d'entraînement positif et mesurable sur l'ensemble des élèves d'une école: un effet multiplicateur qui améliore généralement l'esprit de l'école, prédisposant ainsi les élèves à mieux apprécier leurs institutions et permettant à différents groupes de canaliser énergies, ressources, talents et besoins d'apprentissage au profit d'eux-mêmes et de leurs confrères et aussi de leurs parents, pour ne pas dire aussi consoeurs et commères. La formation entraîne la motivation, à plusieurs niveaux.

M. Dumais: Le ministère de l'Éducation approuve définitivement ces énoncés en faisant appel directement aux ressources de la FESFO pour la tenue de ses stages provinciaux de formation organisés annuellement au camp du lac Couchiching.

Le Stage d'animation jeunesse de l'Ontario, offert aux conseils des élèves de l'ensemble des écoles secondaires françaises ou mixtes de la province en septembre de chaque année – ça débutait aujourd'hui même – utilise intégralement le programme de formation développé à la FESFO. Il est également animé par le personnel responsable de la formation au sein de notre organisme. En ce qui concerne le camp athlétique, articulé plus récemment au même endroit, la FESFO a également participé à l'élaboration et à l'animation du module leadership.

Le Ministère met donc à profit l'expertise de la FESFO et ses ressources reconnues en matière de formation. Ainsi, la FESFO contribue professionnellement à l'organisation et au déroulement des stages de Couchiching, un programme du Ministère. La FESFO y injecte une multitude de ressources matérielles, techniques et, bien entendu, humaines. Notre participation à Couchiching relève bien davantage de notre intérêt à l'égard de la clientèle cible que de la contribution nécessaire mais insuffisante du Ministère, remise à titre de compensation financière de dépenses engagées au cours de la préparation et de l'animation des camps de Couchiching.

La demande des sessions de formation en leadership – nos stages FEL – de la part des écoles s'accroît sans cesse et, en raison de

ressources humaines et financières restreintes, il apparaît impossible que notre organisme comble entièrement les besoins.

Mlle DeCourville Nicol: Le programme FEL et toutes nos activités de formation sont certainement appréciés de la part des élèves et des professeurs en raison de leur pertinence et de l'approche typiquement jeune favorisée par la FESFO. De toute évidence, les élèves peuvent et doivent pouvoir s'identifier à l'organisme qui les représente. Cela ne fait plus de doute, la FESFO sait rejoindre ces jeunes et elle compte le faire plus que jamais.

Les élèves préfèrent recevoir cette formation particulière sur laquelle reposent les camps de leadership en dehors du cadre scolaire habituel. Ils apprécient l'aisance avec laquelle un contact peut être établi auprès d'animateurs à l'extérieur de leurs écoles. Certains sujets traités en stage sont plus difficiles à aborder en présence du professeur que le jeune devra côtoyer tout le reste de l'année.

L'image même des animateurs de FESFO est perçue différemment de celle des enseignants, et cela contribue au succès de nos activités. Le personnel enseignant n'a, du reste, rien à envier au sujet des méthodes ou même de la personnalité de nos animateurs. Il s'agit simplement d'une question de contexte, qui n'en revêt pas moins une importance capitale lorsque l'on parle de développement personnel et de leadership appliqué.

Dans le même ordre d'idées, les élèves manifestent, avec raison, le besoin de sortir du lieu physique qu'est l'école pour profiter au maximum de ce type de stage. Les camps de leadership, justement, ont avantage à se dérouler dans un endroit approprié, conçu pour accueillir des groupes d'une trentaine de personnes et propice à créer une véritable atmosphère de travail, de réflexion et d'échange.

On comprend qu'animateurs et participants favorisent un endroit où il est relativement facile de s'isoler, cependant qu'à l'école, au milieu des cloches qui sonnent et des groupes d'élèves qui se déplacent suivant un rituel quotidien généralement bruyant, l'environnement se prête mal à une activité de formation intensive échelonnée sur trois ou quatre journées entières.

Bien entendu, la location d'un camp est la responsabilité de l'école qui demande un stage, et elle implique des coûts substantiels auxquels il faudra encore ajouter les frais de transport des participants et ceux des animateurs, sans compter les frais d'animation et le coût des cahiers pédagogiques remis à chacun, même si ces deux

derniers coûts sont facturés au strict minimum par la FESFO. L'ensemble de ces dépenses constitue un obstacle parfois considérable pour les conseils d'élèves ou les écoles qui sont aux prises avec des budgets très limités. Ainsi, pour plusieurs qui le désirent ardemment, des écoles ne peuvent pourtant pas bénéficier des avantages d'une session de formation en leadership.

M. Dumais: Depuis quelques années, seul un nombre restreint de stages FEL ont pu être offerts dans des régions éloignées, en raison des coûts supplémentaires auxquels ces écoles doivent faire face. La FESFO, dont le bureau permanent se situe à Ottawa, se voit dans l'obligation de demander aux écoles les frais de transport des animateurs. Elle absorbe un fort pourcentage des salaires et cachets d'animation et fournit le matériel didactique utilisé en stage.

Des efforts ont été entrepris dans l'optique d'une uniformisation des tarifs pour ne pas pénaliser les écoles des régions éloignées. La FESFO ne peut tout de même assumer qu'une partie des coûts globaux de chaque stage, et il devient difficile d'augmenter radicalement les frais habituellement exigés des écoles qui font appel à nos services. Cela reste d'ailleurs fidèle à notre philosophie par rapport à des services abordables et profitables offerts aux élèves.

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Des professeurs de la région du Nord de l'Ontario ont entrepris des démarches afin que des stages de formation en leadership puissent être offerts aux élèves de leurs écoles. Les difficultés budgétaires auxquelles la plupart de ces écoles doivent faire face les ont amenées à considérer l'option d'offrir elles-mêmes cette formation. Par l'entremise d'enseignants animateurs, et en tenant les stages à l'intérieur des écoles, ces derniers aimeraient développer des solutions de rechange. La FESFO a rencontré le groupe d'enseignants, qui se disent conscients de ce qu'il sera sans doute difficile de franchir toutes les étapes requises pour atteindre leur objectif, centré sur les aspirations des jeunes.

De fait, on peut difficilement s'attendre que les professeurs arrivent à concilier leur lourde charge initiale de travail avec les aspects du développement du programme de formation, de l'organisation technique d'un stage et du processus de suivi auprès des participants, une fois le stage terminé. Ils se rendent également compte des avantages mentionnés précédemment au sujet d'une formation offerte en dehors du contexte académique traditionnel.

Pour sa part, la FESFO considère que le rôle des enseignants et des animateurs culturels est

essentiel dans les étapes de recrutement et de suivi des élèves participants. Nous cherchons par tous les moyens à intensifier ce rôle, car le personnel enseignant est en position de bien identifier les besoins particuliers d'un groupe. Nous encourageons ces derniers à collaborer activement à l'évolution des différents comités de jeunes mis sur pied dans nos institutions. Cela exige déjà beaucoup de leur part, et une de nos priorités consiste à leur rendre la tâche plus facile en pourvoyant les élèves d'outils qui rendent leur participation communautaire plus efficace et moins ardue. Elle requiert moins d'intervention du monde adulte.

Avec l'appui des professeurs, nous arrivons donc à développer une plus grande autonomie de la part de nos jeunes qui, à tour de rôle, en font bénéficier leurs pairs de l'école dans l'immédiat et la société plus globale dans un avenir rapproché.

Par ailleurs, la FESFO continue à développer son réseau de jeunes animateurs et à parfaire la formation de ses formateurs. À l'heure actuelle, un certain nombre de pigistes seraient disponibles pour offrir des stages de formation ou des ateliers spécifiques qui répondent à une diversité de besoins identifiés par les élèves ou les responsables scolaires.

Il n'en demeure pas moins que ces animateurs doivent constamment se ressourcer et que la FESFO doit investir temps, argent et énergie à perpétuer ce réseau en développement. Il est également évident que la disponibilité des animateurs est directement proportionnelle au nombre de stages que l'on nous commande.

Mlle DeCourville Nicol: Incidemment, la FESFO, mieux que qui que ce soit, serait en mesure de pourvoir aux besoins précités des élèves. Nous offrons un programme de formation qui répond précisément aux attentes des jeunes et de ceux et celles qui les encadrent au quotidien.

La FESFO ne peut cependant pas suffire à la demande, en raison de ressources financières, et par conséquent humaines, limitées. Elle croit qu'il est du ressort d'un gouvernement responsable d'appuyer financièrement soit l'organisme qui offrira un service reconnu pour un prix raisonnable, soit les écoles qui achèteront ces services, de manière équitable pour chacun. Nous croyons que le gouvernement provincial ne contribue pas sa juste part dans ce domaine.

Il faut rappeler, finalement, que la FESFO dispense d'autres types de formation par l'entremise des ateliers organisés annuellement autour de ses forums régionaux. Ces activités de regroupement, fort populaires, s'inscrivent dans

une suite logique au développement personnel et collectif de nos membres qui ont participé aux camps de formation de Couchiching et aux stages FESFO de leurs écoles. Ces activités de regroupement sont financées en partie par le Secrétariat d'État du Canada, et les élèves participants déboursent des frais d'inscription minimes.

Qui plus est, nous croyons qu'un bon nombre des présentations entendues devant ce comité ont souligné fortement la particularité des besoins des élèves en milieu minoritaire francophone.

Il semble donc conséquent que le ministère de l'Éducation adopte une attitude plus favorable à l'endroit de l'organisme qui assure une formation tout à fait complémentaire aux objectifs de base du système d'éducation ontarien. En acceptant de financer une partie des coûts associés à la mise en oeuvre et au développement des programmes de formation alimentés par la FESFO, la province passerait à l'action dans un domaine de la promotion et de l'enseignement des langues officielles que le Secrétariat d'État ne subventionnerait pas à travers son programme appelé Promotion des langues officielles. Nous savons cependant que le Trésor fédéral assiste la province financièrement par le biais du programme dit Enseignement des langues officielles du Secrétariat d'État du Canada.

LA FESFO est subventionnée en majeure partie par le gouvernement fédéral et ne reçoit aucun financement de soutien de la part du secteur provincial, à l'exception de quelques projets spéciaux articulés ponctuellement avec l'Office des affaires francophones, le ministère des Affaires civiles et le ministère de l'Éducation.

Le ministre de l'Éducation, M. Ward, a lui-même déclaré en juin dernier que son ministère n'avait pas l'intention d'aller de l'avant en développant son propre programme de formation en leadership. Se disant, par ailleurs, conscient du travail effectué par la FESFO et de ses retombées positives sur les jeunes, le ministre de l'Éducation s'est montré sympathique à l'idée de contribuer aux efforts de l'organisme porte-parole des élèves du secondaire. Il a cependant fait remarquer que les obstacles sont omniprésents au budget de la province, en particulier au portefeuille de l'éducation.

Nous croyons que M. Ward mesure bien ses responsabilités par rapport aux besoins des élèves francophones. Nous sommes surtout persuadés que les recommandations du Comité spécial de l'éducation aideront à lui fournir les arguments nécessaires pour débloquer les sommes requises au bénéfice des élèves et des

activités de formation et de regroupement organisées par la FESFO.

À la lumière de la Loi 8, qui entrera en vigueur sous peu, les services offerts par la FESFO doivent prendre une ampleur sans précédent. Dans l'optique d'une redéfinition des buts et objectifs de l'éducation, et dans l'esprit d'une philosophie réaliste, chacun comprendra que nos écoles n'ont pas une minute à perdre quand il s'agit bien de leur clientèle immédiate, 22 000 membres de la Fédération des élèves du secondaire franco-ontarien.

M. Dumais: Sans vouloir conclure, nous aimerions mentionner maintenant que certaines préoccupations des élèves ont été soumises à notre conseil des représentants. La FESFO a préféré ne pas développer en profondeur les thèmes suivants, mais nous tenons cependant à relever devant ce comité quelques-unes des questions sur lesquelles nous aurions tous intérêt à nous pencher.

Mlle DeCourville Nicol: L'école devrait préparer le jeune à affronter le marché du travail. Elle devrait contribuer à développer, chez les élèves, l'automotivation. Dans le contexte actuel, l'école les prépare mal à l'autonomie.

Les élèves formulent des critiques sévères à l'égard des services d'orientation dont ils disposent. La compétence du personnel est parfois remise en cause. Selon la période de l'année, tous les élèves qui le consultent, semblent systématiquement aptes à devenir jardiniers, ou encore, à se joindre aux forces armées. Chez les orienteurs, on n'encourage pas toujours la poursuite des études en français, ce qui peut sembler compréhensible quand on examine de près l'éventail de cours offerts dans cette langue dans nos institutions d'enseignement postsecondaire. C'est là un double problème pour les jeunes franco-ontariens.

Les élèves veulent que l'on encourage les programmes d'enseignement coopératif qui proposent une expérience pratique de la recherche d'emploi, tout en permettant de mieux évaluer leurs aspirations professionnelles.

On a aussi remarqué que des expériences comme Katimavik et Jeunesse Canada Monde gagneraient à se multiplier, car elles constituent souvent une solution de rechange fort valable pour le décrocheur potentiel et pour l'élève - qu'il soit décidé ou dépourvu face à son avenir immédiat - qui veut apprendre, découvrir et expérimenter, tout en contribuant de manière concrète au bien-être d'une communauté.

Ces programmes des plus enrichissants doivent être développés, encouragés et surtout

publicisés auprès des élèves, car ils constituent assurément une forme d'éducation qui peut répondre à des besoins précis, tant pour les participants que pour les groupes qui les accueillent: une forme d'éducation dans laquelle ne s'inscrit pas le système traditionnel actuel, pour des raisons que nous croyons justifiables.

Par ailleurs, nos membres s'inquiètent au sujet de la formation des maîtres et la façon dont les enseignants sont parfois parachutés dans certaines classes pour y enseigner une discipline par rapport à laquelle ils ou elles ont, en effet, peu d'expertise. Les méthodes et les outils pédagogiques, quand ils ne sont pas désuets, reflètent souvent une réalité qui touche de bien loin celle qui est vécue par les élèves franco-ontariens.

La FESFO tient finalement à rappeler l'importance qu'il faut accorder à la consultation auprès des élèves au moment de l'élaboration et de l'évaluation des programmes d'enseignement, de même que la reconnaissance, qu'elle souhaite voir encouragée sous une forme quelconque de crédits académiques, de l'implication volontaire et parascolaire des élèves, telle que nous la présentons à vos audiences du mois de juin.

Mercis nombreux pour cette deuxième invitation, et soyez assurés de notre très grande volonté de collaboration. Merci.

Mme la Présidente: Merci pour votre présentation. Nous avons quelques minutes pour des questions.

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M. R. F. Johnston: Je vous remercie pour la présentation; c'est un bon mémoire.

J'aimerais vous poser quelques questions. Premièrement, il faut dire que ce comité ne peut pas faire de pression auprès du Ministre pour qu'il donne des subventions à un groupe comme le vôtre, mais j'aimerais vous poser des questions un peu comme celles du mois de juillet concernant votre conception de la formation. Il me semble, en lisant votre mémoire, que c'est un peu élitiste. Pouvez-vous nous dire comment on est choisi pour entrer dans une formation comme la vôtre? Quel pourcentage des élèves sont dans des cours techniques ou dans des cours généraux? Est-ce que ce sont seulement des élèves forts du côté académique? Qui est accepté? C'est difficile à comprendre.

M. Dumais: Il n'y a pas vraiment de statistiques que je connaisse à ce sujet-là. Cependant, je sais que les élèves sont recrutés très souvent par un animateur culturel, ou même par la direction de l'école. Ils font très souvent partie du conseil des élèves. Donc, on peut dire

qu'ils font en quelque sorte partie d'une certaine élite à l'école.

Il reste que l'un de nos objectifs dans tout cela, ce n'est pas seulement de travailler auprès de ces jeunes qu'on pourrait qualifier des plus forts mais aussi de provoquer l'effet multiplicateur. La FESFO souhaite qu'on organise des activités, qu'on soit fier de vivre en français dans chacune des écoles.

On souhaite aussi voir des leaders se former. C'est par ces gens-là qu'on peut atteindre, finalement, nos 22 000 membres. Il serait difficile d'organiser des activités pour chacun d'entre eux. Donc, on fonctionne avec des meneurs qui, eux, vont ensuite passer le message ou multiplier l'action à l'intérieur même de l'école.

Pour le reste, je dois avouer que ce sont certainement en grande partie des membres des conseils d'élèves qui sont des participants aux stages et à nos activités. De plus en plus, cependant, on organise des ateliers qui s'adressent spécifiquement à différents groupes du côté des sports, du côté culturel, du côté de la publicité, du côté des arts, enfin.

M. R. F. Johnston: Il nous est très important de savoir les opinions des élèves quand nous nous concentrons sur des questions comme celle des principes de l'éducation, mais aussi sur des choses spécifiques. Une des questions qui nous intéressent maintenant, c'est celle qui se pose sur le groupement des élèves dans des cours homogènes ou dans des cours hétérogènes. Est-ce que la FESFO a des opinions à faire connaître au Comité concernant le «streaming» ou les groupements homogènes d'élèves?

M. Dumais: En fait, on a déjà appuyé les organismes en éducation qui ont comparu ce matin, je crois, ou qui vont comparaître plus tard, à cet effet. Il semble que ce soit un système qui n'a pas encore vraiment eu le temps de faire ses preuves. Ce n'est pas une question sur laquelle on s'est penché très sérieusement. Peut-être qu'Isabelle pourrait nous en parler à titre personnel, mais pour le reste, il semble que cela ne soit pas un système qui a vraiment eu le temps d'être mis en application profondément en Ontario.

Mlle DeCourville Nicol: Je dirais que c'est seulement pendant les cinq dernières années qu'on a établi des cours plus enrichis pour les surdoués ou les doués. Moi, personnellement, j'ai été dans des classes comme celles-là. Pour dire mon expérience personnelle, et non pas au nom de la FESFO, je n'ai pas trouvé cela nécessairement profitable, car je me sentais très à part des autres. J'étais aussi dans la première

année, donc l'année cobaye. On nous donnait des tests et puis on nous disait: «Bien, toi, tu es doué; toi, tu es surdoué; puis toi, tu es bof...» Alors, on ne se sentait pas nécessairement avec les autres.

Je ne suis pas d'accord que ces évaluations, basées sur les tests que vous donnez pour déterminer qui est de calibre différent, soient nécessairement justes. Plusieurs élèves sont très brillants mais n'ont pas une motivation ou une certaine façon de s'exprimer qui les mettraient dans une classe comme ces classes-là.

M. R. F. Johnston: Merci. Je pense qu'il est très important d'entendre les étudiants qui sont dans le système maintenant, pas seulement les gens qui gèrent le système.

J'ai une dernière question, si vous me permettez, concernant les programmes de remplacement. La dernière chose que vous avez dite dans votre mémoire semble dire qu'il faut avoir plus de programmes de remplacement pour éviter que les jeunes décrochent. Y a-t-il un manque de ces programmes dans le système francophone, à votre avis?

M. Dumais: Bien, il n'y en a pas énormément. Ce n'est pas partout dans la province, ce n'est pas dans toutes les écoles qu'il y a, par exemple, des programmes d'enseignement coopératif, qui font partie d'un système conventionnel, le système que l'on connaît, mais qui sont quand même une nouvelle approche. C'est finalement un cours supplémentaire qu'un jeune peut suivre pour vraiment expérimenter ce que c'est que le marché du travail, en allant chercher un employeur chez qui il pourra faire son stage pratique. Alors, il passe par le processus de l'entrevue, etc.; je ne vous expliquerai pas tous les détails. De ça, il n'y en a pas partout.

D'une part, il serait intéressant de développer ces programmes pour que tout le monde puisse en profiter. Puis d'autre part, on sait qu'il y avait un programme au fédéral, si ma mémoire est bonne, qui s'appelait Katimavik; ce programme n'existe plus vraiment. Alors, il reste des programmes de développement international comme Jeunesse Canada Monde, où des jeunes peuvent aller avoir une expérience à l'étranger. Il y a certains programmes nationaux comme ceux-là qui existent; mais d'un point de vue local, régional, provincial ou même national, il n'y a plus grand-chose qui existe, puis à mon avis, il devrait s'en développer de nouveaux.

M. R. F. Johnston: Merci bien.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am going to have to ask my questions in English. I hope you will not mind that.

First of all, I want to congratulate you. I am always happy when groups of students come before us. I know that it demands much giving of self when you take leadership roles in student governance, and I commend you for that as I begin.

I am looking at your philosophy in the goals of education section, and maybe I am misunderstanding this—it is very possible under the circumstances—but you are talking, I feel, about people being given fewer opportunities than you would expect, or being directed to go into the armed forces or into horticulture. I am having trouble understanding. You go on to say that some of the teachers are not prepared for some of the subjects they are teaching. Are you suggesting that the guidance component of the secondary schools that you have had something to do with has not met your expectations?

Miss DeCourville Nicol: The last things that were put into this document—they are different subjects. It is not all in—

Mrs. O'Neill: Speak in French, please, and I will put my earphones on.

Mlle DeCourville Nicol: OK. Tous les ajouts, disons, ne coïncident pas nécessairement, ils n'ont pas de rapport les uns aux autres. Ce sont des idées qui ont été émises par notre conseil des représentants.

Au sujet des jardiniers et des forces armées, c'était un commentaire fait par plusieurs étudiants qui ont passé des tests qui indiquent supposément des attitudes et vers quoi l'étudiant devrait se diriger. Puis on a dit que la plupart des jeunes devraient être soit chauffeurs d'autobus, soit jardiniers ou dans les forces armées. Je dois me demander si ces tests peuvent vraiment déterminer ça; c'est peut-être juste l'effet de certaines évaluations. Mais disons que plusieurs élèves sont découragés et ne trouvent pas que leurs systèmes d'orientation soient propices ou puissent vraiment leur faire découvrir ce qu'ils peuvent faire et ce que l'avenir leur réserve.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am wondering if you could tell me if these tests are the tests that come out of the central office in Toronto, for which we do have some computer programs, or if these are self-administered, school-oriented tests. I think

it would be helpful if you could be more specific here, even if not at this moment.

Miss DeCourville Nicol: What I have heard is that the tests are from the orientation. Therefore, it is computerized. It is a series of, I think, 250 questions. Therefore, it must be from Toronto. I could verify.

Mrs. O'Neill: These are administered in your school, though, on a rotational basis—students' participation?

Miss DeCourville Nicol: Yes, usually every year.

Mrs. O'Neill: I cannot remember at the moment exactly what that program is called, but I think you have given me enough details.

Mr. Dumais: If I may, there is one thing I sort of picked up from that comment. That is the fact that maybe, depending on the year, all of the orientation services might be inclined to direct all the students in one direction because there is a feeling that we are going to need so many programmers in computer programming or whatever in so many years.

It is a system which might direct everyone in the field that will be required in the near future, whereas it does not consider all that much the actual needs of the children and their aspirations.

Mrs. O'Neill: I hope that is not what the purpose of the test is, but I will certainly follow up on your comments.

Mme la Présidente: Encore une fois, je vous remercie pour votre présentation aujourd'hui.

M. Dumais: Merci beaucoup.

Madam Chairman: Just a reminder for members from the clerk that the clerk has checked out for the members, so please bring your room keys down to reception by one o'clock, which is the official checkout time. Bags may be left with the bell captain in secure lockup.

We have retained room 315 for the use of members if you have phone calls or wish to have a place to relax between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. today. Frank Michash does have the keys, so all members are advised to be nice to Frank if they wish to use room 315 for consideration.

The committee recessed at 12:31 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:03 p.m. in Delta B Meeting Room, Delta Ottawa Hotel.

Madam Chairman: I would like to open this afternoon's session of the select committee on education. I would particularly like to welcome our first group, the Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada.

SOCIETY FOR EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND EXCHANGES IN CANADA

Mrs. Webster: My name is Pat Webster. I am the vice-chairman of SEVEC. With me are Jane Dobell, whom it is clear most of you already know, and our executive director, Sandy MacKay.

I would like first of all to thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today to share with you our ideas on the changes that are necessary in Ontario's education system to allow French second-language learning in Ontario to flourish. We think that change in the system, greater flexibility in the education system, is necessary, and that with this change, this greater flexibility, attitudes and motivations will change, so that Ontario schools are organized to allow outside school activity to be viewed as a necessary component of second-language learning. I would really like to emphasize, stress, underline, put in bold the "necessary."

Exchanges are not a frill, they are not an extra, they are not icing on the cake, they are not something you can take or leave; they are a necessary component of effective second-language learning. You would not think of offering a chemistry program without a chemistry lab, you would not think of having a soccer program without a soccer field to practise on. No more can you view exchanges as a frill or icing on the cake. With this view of exchanges outside school activities as a necessary component of second-language learning, the point is that additional funds must be allocated in order for them to be as regarded and in order for us to do the job we need to do.

If you look through the brief we have presented to you today, you will see that SEVEC is now the only association offering bilingual exchanges. We feel we have three major things we must do: we must increase the public awareness and acceptance of the value of outside school activities as this necessary component and we have to provide programs of the highest quality so students really can benefit from the

classroom time they spend and from the dollars we all spend for their classroom time.

SEVEC is now in its 53rd year of operation, the only nonprofit organization in Canada doing bilingual exchanges. In the course of our history since 1981, over 75,000 students have participated in SEVEC exchanges. We offer basically two main kinds of programs. The programs which are our bread-and-butter programs are the summer group exchange and the school year exchange. These are programs which are subsidized, which you support through the Ontario Ministry of Education. Please see page 2, if you will, for a detailed description of the programs we offer. I am going through this quite quickly. You are all fast and good readers, I am sure.

Over 7,000 students participated last year, this 1987-88 year, in our school year and summer group exchanges. Because we do not have the dollars to provide this program for even more students, we offer visits. Last year, there were over 4,000 students who participated in our one-way visit programs. In addition, we have two new programs which are still in their developmental stages. These are courses for immersion teachers and school administrators.

Moving on to page 3, our funding is shown. What I would like you to do, though, is notice two points in particular. Student participation fees raise \$1.5 million annually. In addition to that, \$500,000 is earned by the students themselves in their communities. This is not even shown in our budget. They do this through a variety of activities which involve the community and, again, create a positive motivation and a positive climate in the community.

Most important, though, is the material included in appendix 3. If you can turn to that now, I would like to point out a few things about our funding in relation to the Ontario dollars. In 1982-83, we received almost \$600,000 from the Ministry of Education. The following year we received less than \$400,000. This \$400,000 was secured with a great deal of work and a great deal of effort, mostly by Jane Dobell who was chairman at that time, because the ministry wanted to cut us off altogether. We convinced them that we were the only people who could do the job they said needed to be done. But you will notice that since that point we have been flat-lined.

We received a minor increase in 1986-87, but our funding for the next year will remain at the

\$406,000 level. At the bottom of appendix 3, you will notice that the number of students we have served through these years has not varied considerably. What this means is that we have had to restrict the areas where the students come from. Instead of being able to serve students from Thunder Bay, for example, we have to concentrate on those who are cheapest to move around, which clearly favours the Windsor-Ottawa strip. Really, even the Windsor people are getting a bit doubtful. Obviously, it is not a fair situation, not equitable in any respect. It is something we feel is not a satisfactory situation. By dint of a great deal of effort, we have managed to keep the number of students up, but it cannot continue.

Moving back to the brief itself, SEVEC's system of governance is outlined. What I would like to draw your attention to there is that our membership is composed of boards of education. We have 66 boards of education in Ontario that are members, we have 80 boards in Quebec and 37 boards from other provinces in the rest of Canada. The bulk of our student travel is still between Ontario and Quebec, but we are expanding into other provinces as well. We are the link into Quebec and really the only association which has that link.

On page 4, we talk about the need for and the value of bilingual exchanges and emphasize again that they really are an essential part of second-language learning. Not only that, we have research which documents this. A one-month summer exchange, research has shown us, can equal one school year of second-language learning. That is a very good investment. Not only that, this real life experience for the students gives them an appreciation of the language, gives them a recognition of the value of Canada, provides them with motivation to continue studying. Exchanges, without any question, promote an understanding and an acceptance of the diversity of Canadian culture. They create lifelong friendships, and they improve attitudes towards the second-language group.

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Moving on to page 5, we talk about why SEVEC is needed—very simply, because we are the only people who can do the job and we do it better than anybody else could, even if they were there.

Teachers cannot arrange these exchanges themselves. They do not have the contacts. It is too much trouble for a classroom teacher. It is too much work. They cannot get the dollars very easily, nor can the Ministry of Education. The travel moneys for our exchanges come through

Open House Canada, a federal government program which cannot fund governments directly.

We arrange the twinning. We do all of the administrative arrangements, and we do them extremely well. I say this without any shame. The Ministry of Education itself conducted a review of SEVEC's programs a few years ago and gave us star billing. We have stringent management practices, low overheads. We do the job. We do it well.

There is no question that there is a need for exchanges. The Ministry of Education itself recognizes this. There is a whole variety of things. But in effect, they are paying lipservice to this, and they are paying lipservice to it because they do not put the money there. We feel that what is really necessary is that every student in Ontario who studies French as a second language, every second-language learner in Ontario, should at one point in his school year have the opportunity to participate in an exchange.

Second-language learning depends on attitude and motivation. At present, the administrative system itself actively discourages exchanges. There are many teachers in the system who really want to participate in an exchange. They want to do it, but they receive discouragement. They receive discouragement perhaps from their principal, other teachers in the school, an administrator within their system, a person who does not understand the need or the value; or a teacher, particularly in the high school, who says: "You can't take these students out of school for a full week. Look how my program is going to suffer. I'm not going to get them for the full classroom time."

They would not say that about chemistry. They would not say that even about a sports program, but for some reason they feel that the exchange is a frill, an extra, which it is not.

I think that this group needs to recommend to the government that it make a commitment to provide the dollars to allow these programs to become what they must become, a necessary component of second-language learning.

Mrs. Dobell or Mr. MacKay-Smith may have additional things to say. Otherwise we would be happy to entertain questions.

Mrs. Dobell: I want to make two points. If you turn to appendix 2, which outlines the budget, you will see on the revenue side that we get a substantial amount, \$800,000, from Open House Canada, which is of course a big assist for Ontario and for us all. But those students who travel with that money have to be age 14 and

over. Open House Canada has that cutoff. We have found that the students for which the teachers are bringing us the greatest demand are under 14. They are pre-high-school, ages 12 and 13 in intermediate school, and are trying to decide whether to take French as a second language in their high school program for any length of time. We are trying to deal with the motivational age and at that level there is no federal money involved in the travel component. That is where the Ontario government has been so tremendous.

On a general point, as many of you may know, I have been a school trustee since 1970. I was elected in 1970, as a total unknown, on the slogan of "bilingualism for those who want it," and I have tried to follow that as an ideal. I would suggest that we are wasting our money on French-language programs if we do not incorporate into the French-language program an exchange or an out-of-classroom contact with the second language target group. There just is not a point to the program.

Mr. MacKay: I have nothing to add. I think what has been said has been well said.

Mrs. Webster: We would be happy to answer questions.

Madam Chairman: I will now open up for questions from the members.

Mr. Jackson: Pat, I am delighted to see you. I have been making a point at all of these hearings to identify those persons who have impacted or participated in Halton's great educational system, and I am delighted to see you are as impassioned as ever on the issue of French-language instruction in this province. Parents for French in Halton has never quite been the same without you.

Having said that, I am going to ask you a couple of questions with respect to your expertise, but it may not necessarily be associated with the points in your brief, and I know you will not hold that against me. You made a comment about the sort of prejudice about the time-out for students to take the exchange. For some reason, in language instruction there is this belief that a week or two weeks away would adversely affect their program generally. We are struggling with the issue of semestering. So I want to tie in the concept of semestering nonsemestered schools, and a loss of two weeks in a semestered school is different from the loss of two weeks in a nonsemestered school, in my view.

Could you talk to us a bit about that point, about whether you are seeing resistance tied to

whether or not a school is semestered because of the compression in a language course?

The other part of my question has to do with the disruption of the continuity of French-language instruction. It strikes me that you make a compelling argument for a continuum of French-language-learning activities even throughout the summer, and yet the way OSIS is structured and with its delivery through a semestered school, there could be great disruption. We have been told that in language and math it becomes particularly difficult. Could you comment generally on those areas, and then we might get back to your brief. Those are areas I would like to hear from you on.

Mrs. Webster: On the topic of semestering itself and sequential language learning, it is difficult to answer and it certainly is outside my scope of expertise. However, the general point is one that is well worth discussing more completely. Principals particularly see that the risk, the potential trouble, involved in an exchange just does not make it worth the bother. That is the point I was trying to make earlier: that it is worth the bother.

The system itself needs the flexibility to make it even more evident that the bother is obviously more worth while. This is where the under-13s can really come into play. It is easier in a nonrotary system and in a nonsemestered system. So the dollars can be more effectively spent with less irritation, less trouble and less risk for those younger children.

Mrs. Dobell: Nobody cares if a grade 7 goes away for a week.

Mrs. Webster: There is less caring. They care, of course they care, everybody cares.

Mr. Jackson: Having been a trustee for 10 years, I got the calls with a wide range of parental opinion as to the educational merits of a given field trip and its duration. I had some who said we should be doing that four times a year and others saying, "You should wait until my son is 21 before you let him leave town."

Mrs. Webster: This is why we see that one of our very important tasks is to increase this public understanding. It really is not an extra; it is not a frill. It is an important component. It is the experience of using what you have learned. You could almost say, "Without it, why bother?" It motivates students beyond anything imaginable. Once they have participated in a program like this, they themselves see the value of what they have learned in school. They want to continue and they want to build. They have found that

what they have learned is not some dead words in a textbook, but something that is used for communication, that it is real.

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Mr. Jackson: You really do not have to overpitch us on the issue. For us as legislators, the way they recommend that we take our French-language instruction, if we are to understand the language, is to do the immersion-visitation approach, which is essentially what this is.

Mrs. Webster: Perhaps we should think about offering a new program: a new course for members of parliament and educational administrators at the Ministry of Education who are not involved in this—

Mr. Mahoney: We have a few we would like to send away.

Mr. Jackson: Especially the identified 12-year-olds among us.

Mrs. Dobell: Part of the problem is, I think, that we are looking for greater leadership and conviction on the part of the Ministry of Education. It would be jolly nice if they actually did learn some French; it would be jolly nice if they actually met somebody who spoke it and took an interest in their culture and background. To do that you have to go and meet them.

That has got to be written into the objectives of the course and into the circulars which regulate the French-as-a-second language program. It has to be seen not as a side issue—yeah, yeah, yeah—it has to be right there, front and centre: “We expect that every child will—

Mrs. Webster: When the teachers who want to do this encounter the administrative hangup in the system, they can say: “But look here, directive such and such”—or whatever piece of paper it is from the ministry—“says this is not an extra. This is essential.”

Mr. Jackson: This is my final question. Do you have other questions?

Madam Chairman: I think Mr. Johnston had a brief one, but please go ahead.

Mr. Jackson: When I was first introduced to this in the early 1970s, it was always linked to the notion of being an approach that would be utilized for advanced-level students, exceptional students. It is being redefined in terms of the decade, but I just wonder whether it is more for general-level awareness so that students can determine whether or not they wish to pursue, as you referred to earlier, further intensive studies in French; or is it becoming the norm for average

Ontario students to perceive themselves as futurist bilingual citizens of this province?

Mrs. Webster: Definitely; no question.

Mr. Jackson: Could you talk to us about how your program is accessed? Do whole classrooms go?

Mrs. Dobell: Yes.

Mr. Jackson: Do individuals go?

Mrs. Dobell: Yes.

Mr. Jackson: To what extent have you analysed? Is there a criterion on the basis of marks where individuals go?

Mrs. Dobell: No.

Mrs. Webster: We have a hierarchy of programs. Classrooms go. That, I think, is the virtue of our programs. It is not something for the élite. It is not only for those who have a particular interest or a particular aptitude or a particular pushy parent. It is for whole classrooms. It is for groups of students, but we also offer programs for those students who are really motivated and who really do want to do it. We have individual programs as well.

Mrs. Dobell: In the summer.

Mrs. Dobell: We do classes in the school year and individuals in the summer. When you talk about élite, the Ministry of Education does some superélite programs, absolutely smashing, very good, essential, with Quebec; three-month exchanges. That is marvellous. We have nothing against that, but it is not the broad base. This other is necessary too.

Mr. Jackson: Agreed.

Mrs. Dobell: So dollars, folks. Do not flat-line us for six years. What is transportation going to cost in six years?

Mr. Jackson: Actually, they are reducing as well, but that is another point. You picked the wrong ministry to pick on because Ed Fulton will tell you that the percentage of the Ontario budget going to roads is actually dropping.

However, estimates for the Ministry of Education are coming up, if the government will allow us to do estimates this year. We will be more than delighted to raise that.

Madam Chairman: I somehow think that the government will probably allow estimates this year, Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Jackson: It will be the first time in some years; three years.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Actually, Mr. Jackson asked the line of questioning that I was going to ask, so I will just make a comment. I know from

my own French-language development, which is still very much in process, as we all have witnessed here—

Mr. Jackson: It is as strong as his math.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Oh, no. It is better than my math, but that is another matter. I wish there were immersion courses for that that might help.

I found that immersion for me in Quebec was crucial to my development, and I made a quantum leap. I do not at all dispute the notion that one month can be worth a year. I think that is really crucial.

The other thing I would say—even if it is inflicted upon the deputants—is that being forced to deal in French outside of a classroom situation in real life is the most important way to continually learn that I have had over the last eight or nine years since I have been trying to learn French at the Legislature. I agree with you as to the crucial nature of this sort of thing within the process.

The questions I had were basically asked by Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Reycraft: Could you tell us what happens in the other provinces? Are there other provinces that are more generous in their support of the program than Ontario?

Mr. MacKay: In terms of SEVEC in Canada, they are not. Ontario is certainly the most generous in terms of its contributions to SEVEC. The other provinces, however, are dealing with a very different kind of problem; that is that Ontario is fortunate to be living next door to Quebec for its French exchanges; therefore, its exchanges are much less expensive. The other provinces right now are attempting to deal with this and are requesting special subsidies from the Secretary of State to help with their requests for exchanges, and there are many.

Mrs. Dobell: One of the things is, if SEVEC did not exist and there was not something like this trying to work on the Ontario-Quebec exchanges, it appears you do not want to visit your neighbour. You would rather visit the Rockies, if you are a francophone, while you still own them; it is far away, it is a nice trip, and all that.

What SEVEC says to its neighbour is, "Instead of going to the Rockies, why don't you try Ontario?" And they come. But without that, the Quebecker who is the scarce commodity in this—because we all want to exchange with the French-speaking Quebecker—says: "Well, I am going to make my money take me farthest. I am going to go to British Columbia and Alberta."

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am sure they say Banff.

Mrs. Dobell: Banff. They are very keen on the Banff citizens.

Mrs. Webster: Marathon, as well.

Mr. Reycraft: You have talked about the need for more funding for the programs but you have not suggested or specified how much. What would it take to meet the demand?

Mrs. Webster: We know that we are unable to meet the demand now. Every year we have to turn away school boards that want to participate in the programs and we have to turn away students. It is really the most frustrating part of our job, to turn away people who are anxious.

It is difficult, however, to say how much would be necessary. In 1985, we presented a brief to Sean Conway, the then Minister of Education, and we asked for an additional \$200,000 to begin to meet the demand in Ontario in 1985. We felt that this was a reasonable first step on a systematically planned expansion of trying to meet the demand.

If we were to try to offer an exchange experience for every student in the province at least once in his career, it would need more than an additional \$200,000 a year. But if we had received that as the first step of a systematic step-up in 1985, we would have been pleased.

Mrs. Dobell: As it is, we do not advertise the school year exchange. If we did, we would just have to run away and say we could not do it.

Mr. Jackson: It would cost you a fortune just to handle all the rejections.

Mrs. Webster: Yes, it would. We do not advertise. It is a very good point. We make no effort to publicize the programs because it is so frustrating to have to turn people down.

Mr. Reycraft: The program sells itself. It really does not need to be advertised.

Mrs. Dobell: We are doing one-way visits, and there is no subsidy in that because we are competing with the commercial or other things. We are not talking about visits: "Have a week's holiday in Quebec City." That is what the commercial—Keating's people—say. We say, "Come and study in Quebec City." We are talking to you about exchanges because we really feel that is the motivating thing. They come and live in your house; you go and live in their house.

Madam Chairman: You just answered the very question I was going to ask about advertising and promotion for your program. I have two children who have been in the French immersion. My son, I guess, was in for seven years and my

daughter is still in it; she is in her sixth year. They never brought home any information about the exchange programs. My son I could understand, because pieces of paper tend to get lost between the teacher's hand and the home, but my daughter was very good. I wondered what kind of advertising you did. Basically, the answer is you do not need to because you could not cope with the response.

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Mrs. Dobell: We deal with school boards that are members.

Mrs. Webster: That is right. If the board in your area is a member, then that board would be well aware of the programs which are available to the students. The school year exchange particularly is a tight commodity.

Madam Chairman: Yes. My children are in the Metro Toronto board, so I suspect it probably holds back simply because it knows you cannot meet the need.

Mrs. Webster: Definitely not.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation today.

Our next deputation is Pierre Drouin. Please be seated. Welcome to the select committee on education as we continue our review of OSIS, semestering, streaming and grade promotion. We have allocated one half-hour for your presentation, including time for members to ask questions, so we do hope you will leave time at the end for that purpose. Please begin whenever you are ready. Could you start by introducing yourself for purposes of electronic Hansard?

PIERRE DROUIN

Mr. Drouin: I would like to thank the members of the committee for giving me this opportunity to express my views as a parent. I do not represent any special interest group or federation. I would also like to express my most sincere thanks to Lynn Mellor, who was after me this summer for about three weeks trying to track me down and give me information on the procedures and everything.

I imagine that in the past presentations, you have been given statistics on the performance of some of our students. For example, we have read in newspapers that perhaps 20 per cent of the Canadian population is functionally illiterate, that high school graduates may be reading at or below a grade 9 level and that first-year college students are writing or reading at a grade 4 or even perhaps a grade 3 level. Remedial classes are being set up in colleges and universities.

In my view as a parent, I would say that these might be consequences of a system which represents deeper problems, one of which might be the lack of accountability by the officials—and I include both ministry officials and teachers—and maybe also a lack of system evaluation, because we have gone from system to system in the past and there seems to be no system evaluation as such that was presented to the parents.

There is an urgent need for changing the education system. As a parent, I would like to stress some points. I have a daughter who is presently completing grade 8 in a public elementary school, a French elementary school. From kindergarten to grade 4, she was in a separate French elementary school.

Changes that will be proposed by this committee, in my opinion, do not require additional funds. I think that some of the changes you will be suggesting or comments that you will be making will be on the quality of education and some means of achieving quality of education without additional funds or services. Most parents will agree that the schools cannot do everything, that some things must be left to the home, society or churches and some things are better done at the school level. This is why I feel it is not required to have additional funds to meet some basic changes.

If you turn to page 3, we will look at some of the changes that were recommended with OSIS. About every 10 years there are some changes in the province of Ontario. We have gone from a very highly structured system to a very flexible system. OSIS has been an attempt to restructure a more flexible system over the past years.

In the past, we had a difference between elementary school and secondary school and that was about it. Eventually students were labelled as academic, commercial or technical. Then this came to a two-year, four-year or five-year student and now we are talking about basic, general and advanced students. Even though teachers are told that there is no such specimen as an advanced student or a general student, in fact there are schools in the system where students are being labelled as general or advanced students. This is a fact.

If we compare the past two systems and see if there has been any improvement: looking at HS1, which was replaced by OSIS, in HS1 a high school diploma was granted on completion of 27 credits, of which nine were compulsory courses. There were four major areas of study and

students were required to take at least three subjects from each area.

If we analyse the system, it was possible for a student to obtain a grade 12 diploma by having only 10 per cent of his courses at grade 11 or grade 12 standing, which I think is a bit of a problem, especially when this diploma is presented to an employer and he has to start looking at the diploma, the courses and the level of difficulty, to give an interpretation of such a diploma.

OSIS made some major changes in the fact that it eliminated the two-diploma system, but looking back at HS1 there were in fact two diplomas. It was possible to obtain a grade 13 diploma without in fact having a grade 12 diploma and without the 27 minimum credits for a grade 12 diploma. This was done in the past in some high schools.

OSIS is a system which states that 16 of 30 credits will be compulsory. If we analyse this on a percentage basis, there has been an improvement, because we went from about 33 per cent compulsory courses under HS1 to about 53 per cent under OSIS. But it is still possible under OSIS to obtain a high school diploma with only three courses at the senior level. In theory, it is possible to obtain a high school diploma in Ontario with 90 per cent of your courses taken at the grade 9 or grade 10 level. If we look at special education schools, even some grade 11 or grade 12 courses are in fact grade 5, 6, 7 or 8 courses camouflaged behind a grade 12 code.

A survey of parents, employers and even post-secondary educators will indicate that this is a major area of concern. The general public considers a high school diploma to mean a grade 12 standing in most subjects, at least in the compulsory courses. Most employers also feel they do not have the expertise to sift through a document describing courses, distinguishing between levels of difficulty. Employers expect a grade 12 diploma to mean a little more than it means today.

I have some questions that I, as a parent, would ask the ministry officials to clarify. If under OSIS some courses were labelled as compulsory—in other words, if they feel at the ministry level that some courses are more important—then why were these courses treated the same as the options? They are all 110 hours, the pass mark is 50 per cent and there are no set standards province-wide, or even board-wise, for these compulsory courses.

If you turn to page 7 on grading, when we look at grading we have to distinguish between the

elementary school system and the high school system of grading. In most elementary schools, promotion by age is the thing. Students are passed from grade 2 to grade 3 because they are a certain age and we do not want to keep these students back. High school is on a credit system.

The argument at the elementary school is that holding back a student might result in a poor self-image, low self-esteem and lack of motivation, but theories and experiments on self-esteem and motivation will list success, at whatever level, as the most important factor in building one's confidence. If a student cannot master the task at a particular grade, then pushing him or her ahead and requesting more difficult tasks can only lead to repeated failure, frustration and poor self-image.

On the other hand, early identification of learning disabilities, coupled with understanding and proper remedial exercises, will lead to success, positive self-image and motivation. This is a problem that will have to be addressed at the elementary level.

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It is not uncommon within the same school and within the same board to have completely different evaluation systems for the same course and for the same level of difficulty, because evaluation is left in most cases to the individual teachers. They will perhaps draw some general comments on the mark breakdown, but the actual evaluation, the test construction and the analysis of test results are left to the individual teachers. There may be a need for, if not provincial at least regional standards to be set to improve the quality of education in Ontario.

As a parent, I feel there is a big difference between grading and reporting. Grading is the process of perhaps distinguishing between the weakness and the strengths of students at the school level, but as a parent I get very little information back to me in a concrete, valuable form. For example, I have questioned some teachers at the elementary level to explain to me what a 60 per cent in English might mean. I get the following interpretation:

"Well, it means that your daughter has about 60 per cent skills in both reading and writing." "Is it possible that it means also that in reading she is at 80 per cent but in writing she is only at 40 per cent, for an average of 60?" "Yes, it's possible."

As a parent, I think that this type of reporting of a mark or a letter may not be sufficient. There ought to be additional comments and more frequent information given to parents.

At the elementary school level, it is the thing to send information home about three times a year, because the school might be divided into three trimesters. At the high school level, it is four times a year, and in a semestered school, it is now down to twice per semester. We get less and less information from the individual school on our children's progress, their weaknesses and their strengths.

There may be a need to go back to formal provincial examinations, maybe not at all levels, but at least at some levels, perhaps at some normal breaks during the education system; for example, at the end of grade 6 or grades 6, 8 and 10; or at least back to some major compulsory courses which we feel are courses necessary to provide basic skills in writing, communication and computation.

Turning to page 10 on streaming, we would like to draw your attention to an experiment that was done in the Ottawa Board of Education in 1970-72 at Ecole secondaire Champlain for the grade 9 mathematics class. For at least two years there was no streaming in mathematics, at least for this grade 9 course, with very positive results. I cannot say that all students passed the grade 9, because this would be carrying the thing too far, but the results seem to indicate that a vast majority of students were able to cope with an advanced grade 9 course because there was no streaming and also because the feeder school provided very valuable information to the teachers involved in that program.

Most teachers claim that streaming will produce more homogeneous groups, but if we look at the trend today, teachers are trying to identify each student's learning style. I do not know what they are trying to get. On the one side, they are trying to get each individual learning style, and then on the other hand they want to have more homogeneous groups. They cannot have it both ways.

Whether homogeneous groups provide better education is also questionable. In my view, and talking to my daughter, she tells me that sometimes she gets better explanations from fellow classmates. Because they are at the same level, they understand the difficulties, and a student being a little brighter in math will help somebody else. There might be a need to revamp the streaming system of grade 9, perhaps grade 9 and grade 10.

If we look at streaming more on the evaluation side, evaluation seems to be twofold. We evaluate one way for the advanced student and another way for the general student. It is not

uncommon in high schools today to stress content and give more homework to advanced students and less homework and stress attitude for general students. If we operate this way, then it stands to reason that after two years the advanced students will be better because we have been giving them more content and stressing content more and more.

A question I ask about streaming is whether streaming is not an admission of the failure of the elementary system's promotion based on age and if it is not also a way of downgrading the value of the high school diploma. Is a basic grade 12 math equivalent to a grade 13 physics course? A diploma tells me that they are both worth one credit.

Can elementary school officials justify that after eight years at the elementary level more than 50 per cent of students are being told, even before entering high schools, that they do not have the knowledge and the skills to carry on studies leading to college or university? This is the basic question on streaming. Over 50 per cent of the kids are being told in grade 9, "You do not have it to make it to college and university," and then we try to set up special workshops on motivation. If I got that message, I would not even keep on going to high school.

A question that I have stressed throughout this document is that more and more, because of the Charter of Rights and the Ontario Human Rights Code, eventually somebody will question the present educational system in Ontario with respect to the equality clause. It has started in the United States and it will come to Canada and to Ontario.

I do not believe that students in Ontario are being given equal opportunity for all regardless of age, sex, ethnic origin or social status if we stream students and if there is promotion by age, because then we are telling students that they are being promoted, some because of their age, natural ability and because they are in a school with more facilities—they will master skills faster, acquire more knowledge and will be going to university—while some are being told as early as grade 9: "You are not going to university. You are not going to college."

If you will turn to page 14, I just want to summarize, and then you may have questions.

It is not my intention to point out that all students can learn the same subject at the same speed, but if school boards can organize some summer schools for students who have failed and these summer school programs are attended mainly by advanced students, why can they not

organize summer school programs that will allow students to be given more time to master the same skills, because maybe for some students, one school year is not sufficient, and an additional 20 to 50 hours in the summer might just do it.

I think it is of prime importance to define in very clear, unequivocal terms what exactly a student should know—this is not done in our ministry guidelines—by the time he graduates from grade 2, grade 5, grade 8 or grade 9.

On the question of accountability, I was reading a document—and this is stressed in most high schools—that the sole person responsible for the education is the student himself. It is like telling a patient entering the hospital: "If you get cured, you are responsible. The doctors have nothing to do with it." There should be more accountability on the part of ministry officials and teachers. A student entering grade 2 cannot be told: "You are responsible for your education." It is totally unacceptable and, as a parent, I feel I cannot accept such a statement. Do you have any questions?

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Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. You have obviously put a lot of work into your brief and we appreciate your contribution. I think I noticed a gleam in Mr. Johnston's eye when you were talking about social equality, streaming and such things, so I will give the floor to him to start off with.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Madam Chairman is always watching the gleam in my eye. It is a very dangerous thing. It is there most of the time; other people call it a glaze.

I just want to make a comment rather than ask a question, if I might—well, maybe there is one question—because I find this a refreshing document with some very interesting insights. I think your comments about the human rights questions are very valid. We have not heard that very much. I think you are right that those kinds of challenges may very well find themselves coming forward in the next little while and imposing changes on the system instead of planning for changes within the educational framework.

You are either a remarkable parent in terms of having the synthesis of ideas that you have brought forward here, an example to all parents for their involvement with their kids, or there is more in your experience than just being a parent. I was just wondering what your other connections with the education system are.

Mr. Drouin: I wanted to make the presentation as a parent because I did not want to

associate with any of the special interest groups, but if you want my background, I have been teaching high school for 20 years. I have been teaching high school in both the French and English secondary schools. I have been involved with continuing education as a teacher, an administrator and a curriculum supervisor.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There goes the dream of the ideal parent.

Mr. Drouin: I have seen both systems, so when I look at continuing education and I see students who have dropped out of high school coming back at night school, and most of them are general-level students, I wonder why they are coming back. "Why did you leave in the first place?" Speaking to them, they tell me, "I left in the first place because I was told I was not going to make it, so I went out to find out if I could make it."

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think that blend of experience has really produced a very useful brief for us that I appreciate very much.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Reycraft has a question.

Mr. Reycraft: Now that I know the presenter's background, my line of questioning has changed as well. Initially in your brief, in the first page, you make the statement that most parents are in the dark when it comes to the education of their children. Do you suggest that is the fault of the system more than it is a failure of parents to exercise their responsibility to learn about how their kids are taught and educated?

Mr. Drouin: Let me summarize the information I got over the past, say, nine years when my daughter was at the elementary school, and this is two systems, separate and public. There is no big difference. At the end of August, I get the bus route schedule. The first week of September, I get a list stating some of the school holidays and that there will be an information meeting at the end of September. Then I get a memo maybe on field trips, if I want to give permission, which I think might be irrelevant, because it could be done once at the beginning of the year. But for information about my daughter's status in a classroom in mathematics or English, I get to meet the teacher twice a year. The final report is a final and I do not meet the teacher in June. I get information on my daughter's weaknesses and strengths in subjects twice a year.

Mr. Reycraft: Have you asked to meet with the teacher more often than that?

Mr. Drouin: I call. I have more information because I take the initiative, but do you think that

all parents in Ontario take the initiative? Should it not be the other way around?

Mr. Reycraft: That is the point I was trying to make. I too spent a number of years as a teacher and I am very familiar, as I am sure you are, with the response to letters to parents inviting them to call for an interview, with the response to information meetings that are organized to make parents aware of such things as OSIS. My experience was not a very positive one.

Mr. Drouin: Maybe what the parents want to know is: "Exactly how is my child doing in a classroom? What are the problems? If there are some problems, what remedial help will be given?" If this is given, then I know that eventually my daughter will make it to college and university. I want to know that each year somebody is taking care of my daughter and that if she has problems, I will be made aware as early as possible that remedial steps will be taken.

Mr. Reycraft: I suggest that the best way to find that out is to do exactly what you say you intend to do, and that is to contact the teacher and meet with him or her more than just a couple of times a year. I suggest that you are in a minority of parents who actually do that.

Regarding your comments about streaming, I am just now trying to put them into the context of your background. From your experience with it, do you feel that parents, in working with their children, have a choice of level of difficulty of subjects that they select?

Mr. Drouin: They will sign the options sheet, but they will also trust the teacher making the recommendation. If a teacher makes a recommendation that my daughter should be taking, for example, general mathematics, grade 9, and I know that teacher has been with my daughter one or maybe two years, I am going to trust his judgement. Most parents will react this way.

Mr. Reycraft: Has it been your experience that most parents have taken the advice of teachers?

Mr. Drouin: Most of them.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Drouin. We appreciate your presentation before our committee today.

Our next delegation is from the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Ottawa unit. Perhaps the members of OECTA would please come up and be seated.

Good afternoon and welcome to our committee. We have allocated half an hour for the OECTA presentation, which includes question time for the members, so if you would proceed

whenever you are ready, please do so and start by identifying yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO ENGLISH CATHOLIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION, OTTAWA UNIT

Mrs. Charland: I am Rhena Charland. I am the president of the Ottawa unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association.

Sister Anna Clare: I am Sister Anna Clare. I am past president of the Ottawa unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and third vice-president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association provincially.

Mrs. Charland: Our unit of OECTA represents some 600 men and women teaching kindergarten through to grade 12-OAC in our elementary and secondary schools of the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

We acknowledge and appreciate the significance accorded education in the province through the establishment of this select committee on education of the Legislature. The process of dialogue with the people of Ontario, which demonstrates willingness to examine, openness to change and responsiveness to expressed concerns, is commendable.

We are pleased to participate this afternoon and would like to bring to your attention our concerns related to education in the Catholic community of Ottawa, addressing the following five issues: the goals of education, regulation 269, separate school representation at the Ministry of Education, financing of separate school education and secondary school issues.

The goals of education of Ontario as articulated in 1984 are general in their expression, encompassing the development, health and preservation of the state and of the individual and respecting, fostering and serving the pluralist, multicultural and bilingual nature of Ontario.

These goals permit the integration of Roman Catholic religious values with the ministry's curriculum guidelines. This harmony of religious values and curriculum is demonstrated in recent documents such as separate school courses of study in the fields of guidance, geography, family studies, science and acquired immune deficiency syndrome education. The ministry's goals provide a general direction. The school boards develop specificity.

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Although examining goals from time to time is necessary, in this case, since they meet the established criteria, we feel the best use of the

resources of time, money and people will be in the implementation of the goals. Revision of goals at this time, in our opinion, is not necessary.

In regard to regulation 269, Ontario teachers' qualifications, Catholic educators teaching grades 9 through 12/OAC require academic qualifications for religious education and the opportunity to obtain professional training in teaching methodology in this area. Therefore, the inclusion of religious education in schedule A of regulation 269 is an imperative for Catholic educators.

The Ministry of Education has been supportive of the legally constituted separate school system and has provided for its financial, pedagogical and legal needs in its historical development. While it is understood that the ministry is not responsible for the establishment and maintenance of religious education in separate schools, its recognized right of control over the qualifications of teachers carries with it the obligation to provide the complete preparation of separate school teachers for the total program offered in separate schools, as legitimately required by separate school supporters.

In regard to separate school representation in the Ministry of Education, it is both reasonable and responsible to expect that the Ministry of Education, comprised of two systems of education, each with distinct values and philosophies, would have those values and philosophies represented by its personnel. An appropriate personnel selection policy would recruit and deploy people within the structure of the ministry who can convey the qualities and experience they have drawn from their commitment to Catholic education.

This separate school voice would serve to co-ordinate, articulate and provide improved liaison between major components of the ministry's various departments and the separate school system. The appointment of competent and proven educators from the Catholic community to all levels of the ministry is an eminently justifiable expectation.

The financing of separate school education gives us some concern. Catholic educators commend the Ministry of Education for implementing many of the recommendations of the Catholic community to the Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education in Ontario. However, we still have a number of concerns with respect to the matter of financing of education.

With respect to the concept of the homogeneous school board, increased financial and administrative efficiency cannot be the only consideration. The constitutional right of the Catholic community to exclusive management and control of its schools to permit Catholic education to be provided without interference in adopting curriculum, selecting teachers, choosing sites and otherwise administering these schools must be recognized and respected. Therefore, the model of a large, homogeneous board is unacceptable to the Ottawa Catholic educators as a model for delivery of Catholic education.

In the matter of calculating commercial and industrial assessment for appointment to separate and public school boards, we endorse the method which would base the calculation of such assessment on the ratio of public-separate school enrolment rather than that of residential and farm assessment of the respective boards.

In regard to secondary school issues, the Catholic community welcomed the completion of the separate school system with the realization of its right to provide publicly funded education through grade 12/OAC. As Ottawa Catholic educators committed to the excellence of education in Ontario, we wish to raise certain concerns with respect to the delivery of secondary education in the areas of streaming, semestering and OSIS.

Changes regarding streaming should be delayed until a properly prepared alternative method of delivery is researched and developed and until appropriate in-servicing is provided to educators. New ways of delivering secondary education to students with different abilities require time and money for consultation and preparation. Effective implementation cannot be legislated simply.

Of the two scheduling models prevalent in Ontario schools, both the semestering and the traditional models are used in our Ottawa Catholic secondary schools. Before the Ministry of Education determines that one method rather than the other is to be the scheduling model for Ontario, Ottawa Catholic educators strongly recommend that a comparative study of student achievement, attitudes and retention rates in semestered and traditional schools be undertaken.

Ottawa educators are deeply concerned that many objectives of OSIS are not being met. The increase in compulsory credits has been detrimental to the basic and general students. We believe there is a correlation between the

continued high dropout rate among the general-level and basic-level students and the increased number of compulsory courses required by OSIS.

The majority of our students in immersion programs are forced to take an additional five credits in français in order to obtain a bilingual certificate. This raises to 21 the number of compulsory courses for these students. In our Catholic system, we can grant two credits in religious education at the grade 9 and 10 level, and we want our students to get credit for religious education in grades 11, 12 and OAC.

As teachers in a Catholic system, we ask that the Ministry of Education make religious education credit courses in the senior division. This request is consistent with the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of Canada on June 25, 1987, when it recognized the rights of Roman Catholics to have a separate school system extended to grades 11, 12 and OAC.

Catholic education has a strong tradition of educating the whole person for life and does not focus exclusively on preparing students for the workforce. If the Ministry of Education were to provide our separate school system with financing to offer vocational and technical subjects, we Catholic teachers would continue to foster the dignity of work associated with these areas of study through the integration of our Catholic Christian values.

We recommend that Catholic teachers in Ottawa be involved in a review of OSIS and that this review take place in 1989.

In summary, I would like to say that the Ottawa OECTA has a history of dialoguing with legislative committees on education. We are reiterating this afternoon previous messages with such terms as "representation in the ministry," "involvement in reviews," "development of thorough teacher education programs to effect change" and "real equity when it comes to funding and facilities."

We stand ready to participate with the Ministry of Education, with school boards and with parents in educating today's students. We recognize that this process of consultation and dialogue goes far towards ensuring that Ontario students will continue to benefit from excellence in education.

Thank you. Sister Anna Clare will join me in answering questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for your presentation. Just before we go to the members for questions, I have a brief one of my own.

In the first paragraph on page 7, you said, "We believe that there is a correlation between the continued high dropout rate among the general-level and basic-level students and the increased number of compulsory courses required by OSIS." We heard from the Carleton Board of Education this morning that it has actually done a statistical analysis of the dropout rate in the board over the last four years. I believe it was under five per cent per year, which is considerably lower than what they say the provincial average is. Has the Ottawa unit of OECTA done any kind of statistical gathering in this regard? Do you have any comments?

Sister Anna Clare: No, we have not done any statistical review, but we have a perception that this has happened.

We really feel that there would be less dropouts of general-level students if we were able to offer technological courses for them. We do not have one school among the Ottawa Catholic high schools that has proper technological facilities. We do not have one school facility that is a secondary facility.

I would like this committee to know that I am really appalled at the Minister of Education's so-called—what will I call it? I can hardly find a name for it—agreement with the Ottawa Board of Education and the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board regarding our English-speaking high schools.

I would like you, as MPPs, to know that the English Catholics do not have one proper secondary school facility. The agreement was to be this: that Fisher Park High School, which is built on city of Ottawa property—it does not belong to the Ottawa Board of Education—was to continue to be leased to the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board as part of the agreement for the next three years and that a sum of money was to be given to update Immaculata Separate School and St. Patrick Separate School. I know these situations very well. Immaculata high school is not even owned by the Ottawa separate school board; one quarter of it is. It occupies one city block.

There is not one inch of land for outdoor education, for track and field or for any kind of outdoor facilities. There is barely a big enough parking lot for the staff at Immaculata high school.

They were told by the ministry to upgrade that school and given very little money to do it. Land could not even be expropriated around it. There is a big high-rise on one side and a church on another side.

They were told also to upgrade St. Patrick's Separate School. I happen to be principal at St. Patrick's, so I would like you to know what St. Patrick's is like. It is an elementary facility. We have six portables and we have six classrooms above an elementary school that has a day care underneath. We do not have one self-contained building on the campus.

It is totally inappropriate. I have almost 1,000 students at the school, and they are eating in half of a gymnasium that has been condemned. They are presently building us some facility for a cafeteria.

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I am just appalled that the minister would send down a recommendation that the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board would accept these kinds of conditions for English-speaking students. I would like you, as legislators, to know that it is not acceptable to the Ontario English Catholic teachers and it is not acceptable to the Ontario English Catholic parents in Ottawa. It is just appalling what we are putting up with. We attempt to offer quality education under those circumstances.

Madam Chairman: Now that you have gotten that off your chest—

Sister Anna Clare: I am glad I had the opportunity. I appreciate the opportunity I was given to be here today.

Madam Chairman: We are listening. We understand that it is a very contentious issue, and your comments are noted. I will go to members' questions now.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is nice to see you. That was the line of questioning I was going to follow, not that that was the line of answering I was expecting to hear, but I am glad it came out. I think that is great.

I wonder if you could tell me what percentage of students in grades 9 and 10 take religious education courses.

Sister Anna Clare: They all take religious education courses. They are compulsory courses in our Catholic high schools in Ottawa.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I was just looking at that in terms of the numbers of compulsory credits that a child in immersion is going to have to take. The total of 21 includes those two?

Sister Anna Clare: No, it does not.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: So that is 23, in fact?

Sister Anna Clare: Actually, 23 courses, yes. Many of our students are in the immersion programs and getting a bilingual certificate—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That was my next question.

Sister Anna Clare:—which the University of Ottawa accepts. They do not have to write a French examination to enter that bilingual university if they have our bilingual certificate.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You, like others, have asked for the four credits?

Sister Anna Clare: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would then presume that you would want them, if not to be compulsory, to be as close to compulsory as possible if you really want them for the purposes you are saying. That would then take us to 25 out of 30 credits that would be compulsory.

Sister Anna Clare: That is right.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just worry what that does, forgetting about constraints you have on buildings and things, in terms of the kinds of options that students can look at. We have had people come before us talking about the arts and other kinds of things that are being left out now with OSIS the way it is. I wonder whether, as teachers, you have concerns about that as well, about the tradeoff?

Sister Anna Clare: Yes, I really feel there has to be a review of OSIS and a review of the number of compulsory credits. We are really concerned, and the province and the ministry are, about the number of dropouts in high school. I would like to put in a good word here for family studies, which was just abandoned when they made the compulsory credits.

The technological subjects and the arts are looked after. Students can choose from those subjects for one compulsory at the grades 9 and 10 level, but family studies was left off of that. In my school we do not offer family studies any more. They offer it at the grades 7 and 8 level, but not at the high school level because students cannot fit that into their programs. Many general-level students, particularly girls, would profit by having a family study program. I really feel OSIS needs to be revised.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One can argue that male and female students can benefit by that, given all our knowledge of how useful that could be for all sorts of parenting reasons thereafter.

Sister Anna Clare: We did attempt to offer it, but students did not take it because it was not one of the compulsories.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Exactly.

Mrs. O'Neill: I want to go back to Mr. Johnston's line of questioning regarding the

review of OSIS. You have given one indication, about the compulsories. Are there other areas of OSIS that are concerning you or have you done any internal review of your own? What are the lines of thinking you have regarding the review?

Sister Anna Clare: We have looked at Dr. King's studies from Kingston, as well as the Radwanski report. We have had both of those gentlemen here in Ottawa to speak to us. Personally, as an educator of some long experience, I think there would be some merit in having a common grade 9 and 10 and then branching out from that, but I think that if we are going to keep students in high school, we have to have courses that will serve their needs and that they will be able to do and we will have to look after the students who cannot cope at the advanced level. I do not think that in our Catholic school system we have had the funding to do that. I think we could do it very well if we had the funding and if we had the facility to do it in.

Mrs. O'Neill: May I ask about the integration of special education students at the secondary level in your system?

Sister Anna Clare: Yes, in my school they are integrated. They do come out of their regular program for special help in certain subjects. Sometimes it is for a few months and sometimes it is for the whole year. They have to take a reduced number of credits when they do that, but in my school I think we are providing quite good help for students who have learning disabilities.

Mrs. O'Neill: My final question is, and I very strongly support your statement on family studies, is there a tendency for students to drop that in preference for business programs?

Sister Anna Clare: Oh, yes. I do not offer it at all this year in my school. I put it in my course booklet every year and there are no takers because it is not one of the compulsories; so we are not offering it at all.

Mrs. O'Neill: I understand that, but is the vacuum being filled by business studies then?

Sister Anna Clare: Yes, it is being filled. I would say business studies are becoming much more popular now.

Mr. McGuinty: Sister, I was surprised at your comment on the English Catholic high school students' accommodation—it was brought in more as a kind of editorial comment, as an aside rather than an integral part of your report—because I think it is a most important consideration at this time. If I might look at it from my own perspective, I live in the southeast end of the city, in which area there are not adequate

accommodation facilities for English Catholic high school students. What is the effect of that along the way now?

Sister Anna Clare: The effect of that is that our grade 8 students see four public high schools around us that are not filled at all, and they want a self-contained high school. We do have a dropout to the public system from grade 8, because they have anticipated that in the very near future, especially since full funding was promised in 1984 and was upheld in the courts two years ago, we would have a proper secondary school facility and that some of the public schools would be offered to the English-speaking people, and so parents and students were anticipating that we would be getting at least one of the four schools in the southeast end of the city, because none of those schools is filled.

Mr. McGuinty: Suppose in the next couple of years one of these schools became depleted to the point where it was superfluous. It would be available then to the separate board?

Sister Anna Clare: I am not sure it would be. The Ottawa Board of Education is trying to put in programs, I think, in the schools to fill them up.

Mr. McGuinty: No, if a school were depleted to the point where they had no further use of it, it would become available then to the Ottawa separate school board?

Sister Anna Clare: I personally would be delighted to have a secondary school facility.

Mr. McGuinty: It would be available. Do you know at what price or what cost?

Sister Anna Clare: I am not in finance, but I guess it would cost a considerable amount of money to get that for us, but are Catholic high school students second class that we have to be in elementary buildings with elementary facilities and offering secondary courses?

Mr. McGuinty: My understanding of that situation is that at the present time, if one of these public high schools were transferred, it would be transferred for \$1. If two years hence it becomes superfluous and is sold, it could be sold at market value, and the Catholic population of this area, which has built those schools and paid for them over the years, would not have its vested interest recognized. I think that is the situation. It is even more deplorable, I think, sister, than you elaborated.

Mrs. O'Neill: On a point of information, Madam Chairman, I think that there is certainly legislation and regulations within the department which state that if a school is closed, it has to be

offered first of all to the immediate coterminous board. Second, if that is done and there is a need established, there would certainly be participation with ministry funding in the purchasing for that particular board.

Mr. McGuinty: That is true.

1520

Mrs. O'Neill: I do not like to deal with hypothetical situations, but there are regulations that do govern the instance that has just been stated.

Madam Chairman: Thanks for the point of information.

Mr. McGuinty: May I respond to that point of information, please? That is absolutely right. The obligation of the board that has a surplus school is to give right of first refusal to a coterminous board. My point is that now the Ottawa Board of Education has been released from further obligations with regard to Bill 30, that school would be sold at market price, notwithstanding the fact of course that you would have ministry participation. That is part of the situation.

Mrs. Charland: May I respond to the original question of streaming and financing? The fact is I am surprised that two members of the committee are registering surprise that the Ottawa Catholic teachers would be commenting on facilities. We had a lot of difficulty preparing a brief that would talk about finance and streaming and not realize the reality of our situation and the difficulty it would pose. I think we made it very bland in our brief and are adding a little enthusiasm to it in our presentation. It is very difficult to provide the kinds of things that streaming will talk about and to talk about financing of separate schools or education without dealing with those issues that touch us every day.

Madam Chairman: I am sure there was not a member here who thought you were trying to lull us into a false sense of security by not mentioning it in your brief.

Mr. Reycraft: I hope it will not come as any surprise to anybody that I would like to get back to one of the four issues this committee is supposed to be reviewing at the moment.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Shame on you.

Mr. Reycraft: That is this matter of streaming. In your brief, you have said that changes should be delayed "until," and that implies that changes should occur. Is that your position?

Mrs. Charland: I think you are aware that it is the position of our provincial association to

philosophically support streaming and take a look at the research that is in favour of it. I think that philosophically we do not have a problem with it, but we are here representing the Ottawa—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is the other way around. The provincial organization said it was opposed to streaming and the philosophies.

Mrs. Charland: Well, I will explain my view of the philosophical thing. The idea of enhancing the self-esteem of the student, and the negative kinds of things shown in the research that streaming does, we would recognize and we be quite happy to change that. But what we, as a group of Ottawa Catholic teachers, are here presenting is the teachers' side of that. We do not want any changes to occur without the proper amount of in-service.

Each time there is a change, the change seems to be legislated, and we often come up on the short end of it in terms of funds for in-servicing the teachers. You cannot have that change occur unless we are adequately in-serviced. What we are saying is, let's slow down and take a look at it when all those things are in place. We are not saying it is a bad idea, we are saying there has to be some consideration of how the teachers will be prepared to handle such a great change, if it were to happen tomorrow. Professional development, pupil-teacher ratio and curriculum materials are our concerns.

Mr. Reycraft: The support of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, the parent body, for destreaming the system is conditional on the pupil-teacher ratio being reduced and some other things as well. Given the pressures on the system for additional funding, some of which you have raised this afternoon, do you think it is realistic to pursue a change in the system that would reduce the size of secondary classes to 20, as we were told last week in Toronto would be required? Do you think that is a realistic objective to pursue at this time?

Mrs. Charland: If you are asking the president of a local teachers' unit, I certainly think it is, and if it is well presented to the parent community, I do not think there are very many parents who do not want the best situation for their children, and they are the people who are paying for it.

Madam Chairman: We have a supplementary from Mr. Mahoney on that point.

Mr. Mahoney: I just wanted to tell you that I am actually more surprised, in the hearings, that we have not had more people making the kind of statements you made, representing a community

where kids are having lunch at 8 a.m. to start their day, and kids go through their entire educational secondary career without ever getting into a main building in Mississauga. I have a lot of sympathy with what you are saying, and I am surprised we have not heard more of it—that the issue of streaming and semestering and the quality of the education is very much related to the facilities you are going to teach them in.

Madam Chairman: As you can tell, you have touched on a topic very close to Mr. Mahoney's heart. In fact, we have all been well indoctrinated on it.

Mr. Mahoney: Do you mean I have a heart?

Madam Chairman: It is small, but we have managed to find it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do we have a consensus of the committee on this?

Madam Chairman: I am not even sure I can say you are outvoted, Mr. Johnston. It is still a hung jury on that one.

Did you have any final comments?

Mrs. Charland: None, other than to thank the committee for the opportunity to dialogue, again.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. It was a very good presentation. Certainly a bit of lively discussion in there. We appreciate your coming.

Mrs. Charland: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Our final presentation today will be by Voice for Hearing Impaired Children. Would you come forward, please. Please have a seat in front of the microphone and make yourself comfortable. Welcome to our committee.

We have allocated half an hour for your presentation, so we look forward to hearing your words of wisdom. We would ask that you leave sufficient time at the end for members to ask questions of you. Please begin whenever you are ready, and if you would just begin by introducing yourself for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

VOICE FOR HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN, OTTAWA CHAPTER

Mr. Heale: We represent the Ottawa chapter of Voice for Hearing Impaired Children. My name is Don Heale. I am the chairperson. With me today is Sheila Duke, who is our provincial board of directors representative from the Ottawa chapter; Margaret Rejhon, who is our immediate past-president; and Vicki Robinson, who is our membership chairperson and also one of our representatives on the Ottawa board special education advisory committee. I think we have a

fairly diverse representation of people here today.

Vicki has a son with a moderate-to-severe hearing loss, who is in the elementary school system, attending his local school here in Ottawa.

Margaret has a son with a profound hearing loss, who is attending high school here in Ottawa using a cued speech method.

Sheila has a daughter in second year of university at the University of Waterloo, who is on the dean's list this year I understand, and she has a profound hearing loss.

I have a son in elementary school here in Ottawa, who has a severe-to-profound hearing loss. He attends his neighbourhood school.

So, that is a little bit about us.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for asking us to come today to talk with you. We really appreciate the opportunity and feel that this is one way that government maybe can help the cause of a hearing impaired child, and we do thank you very much for letting us come.

1530

First of all, I would like to briefly highlight the topics we want to cover in the short time we are here today. We have three areas we would like to talk to you about. First, we would like to give you some of the results of a recent study of hearing-impaired children attending schools with the Carleton Board of Education here in Ottawa.

This study was done by the educators and they have kindly consented to let us share those results with you today. It is just a brief overview of the study, but we thought you might find it beneficial. Sheila Duke will present it, and we do have copies of the bar charts showing the results, which I think you have.

I would also like to talk briefly about a video. We had planned to show it, but time did not permit. So I have some copies of the brochure that talks about what the video is and we have a copy of it to present to the committee and anybody who is interested can certainly take a look at it. It is in VHS format. We produced it here in Ottawa just last year, so it is quite current.

Finally, I would like to highlight some of the concerns and the recommendations that we did present to you in advance in the short paper that was forwarded to Toronto. We would like to spend a few minutes to cover a few of those. I hope that everybody has had the opportunity to read the presentation because we did not propose to read the whole thing here today.

Madam Chairman: I will just confirm that it was distributed to members a week ago in

advance and I believe all members have read it. So we are quite comfortable with your highlighting it.

Mr. Heale: Fine. I did not want to bore you with reading it verbatim to you again. To get started, Sheila will talk to you about the study.

Mrs. Duke: Before I start on the study, I would like to say that I recognize the presence of Yvonne O'Neill here, a former trustee of the Carleton Board of Education. Also, you used to be Professor McGuinty from Ottawa University. I was in an English class about 30 years ago with you.

Mr. McGuinty: How long ago?

Mrs. Duke: It was 31 years ago.

Mr. McGuinty: On a point of order: I never taught kindergarten.

Mrs. Duke: I am pleased to be here. I am presenting, with their permission, the results of a study that the Carleton Board of Education teachers did two years ago for a special presentation at an international convention.

This is the raw data and if you need any further information, I am sure they would be delighted to give you a full-blown presentation complete with a video of their own. The additional data was passed around; these were originally on overheads. The first piece of paper is on class placement.

It will be noted that in the Carleton Board of Education there are no segregated classes for the hearing-impaired only. All the hearing-impaired are with normally hearing peers. There were 49 in regular classes; 16 in special education classes such as opportunity or social adjustment classes, and seven students were in trainable-mentally-retarded classes and these seven were not included in the study. So 65 students were studied and 75 per cent of those hearing-impaired students were in regular classes.

The second page deals with class placement versus hearing loss. The important point to note in this graph is that all degrees of hearing impairment are in regular classes. There are some mild, some moderate, some severe and profound students. An additional point to note is that most severe and profound students are in regular classes rather than in special classes. That is on the second sheet of paper.

On the third and fourth sheets of paper are some test results from scores. These students were tested in math and reading. The students in special education classes were excluded from this test, because that is the reason they are in the special education classes to begin with; their

scores are lower in math and reading. On the third page they deal with math, and all degrees of hearing impairment are present. It is a normal bell curve distribution. It will be noted that in the highest category, the hearing-impaired are above grade level. In other words, there are more hearing-impaired children above grade level than below grade level.

The next sheet of paper deals with reading scores. Similarly, all degrees of hearing impairment are present except in the at-grade level portion, where there are no moderate or severe hearing-impaired children. It is a common finding that, normally, hearing-impaired students are very poor readers, but here, most of them are in the highest category, above-grade level. There are more hearing-impaired students in the higher level than there are in either the at-grade level or the below-grade level category.

The next page deals with speech intelligibility. This test was done on naive adult listeners. It should be noted that severe and profound hearing-impaired students are in the 90 per cent to 100 per cent intelligible and the 80 per cent to 89 per cent intelligible ranges. I would like to point out that less than 60 per cent are in the virtually incomprehensible range. There were three students, and one was from a total-communication background and had been in the program for two years. Two others were very young and very profound students. The literature states that speech intelligibility improves with age and with training, so no doubt that score should improve over the years.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Does this include the special ed?

Mrs. Duke: Yes, all of them. The only two scores they were left out of were the math and the reading.

On the next sheet, story-writing performance, it is the normal distribution again. You have all levels of hearing impairment, below average, average and good.

Language performance is the last sheet, and that is spoken language. The majority, or the largest group, is in the average performance, with severe and profound hearing-impaired children in the superior range. You are missing the moderate and the mild in that range, but the important point is to note that the severe and the profound are in the superior range.

I would just like to comment that from a personal point of view, I am very proud of the services in the Carleton Board of Education, the Ottawa Board of Education and all the area boards in general. We are very fortunate with the

services we have here, and we are proud of the levels our children are attaining.

That is basically what I came to say. If you have any other information or if I could answer any questions that come to mind, I would be happy to do that.

Mr. Heale: Perhaps we could do that when we are finished. Now, certainly if there are any questions, maybe we can field them, but we can perhaps finish the formal portion of our presentation.

I would just like to say too that the study shows, from our perspective, that hearing-impaired children, irrespective of how great their hearing loss, can do very well in the mainstream. That is not to say that all hearing-impaired children will do well in the mainstream, but certainly from our perspective in Ottawa, we have 142 children in the four local boards in the mainstream right now. This sample of 64 from the Carleton public board is a good example of how well these children are doing and are continuing to do. We are very proud, as Mrs. Duke says, of what we have and of how well the children are doing. We think that this committee is perhaps the place where some of the concerns that we do have can be addressed. Perhaps other children in some other parts of Ontario where some of these services are not in place can be given the benefit of basically achieving the same degree of success.

1540

The second thing we wanted to talk about just briefly is the film that we have produced. I have some brochures that talk about the film. We thought it would be beneficial to just tell you a little bit about it and give you a copy, even though we would not have time to show it. But I would like to just say that it is a film about hearing-impaired children in general and it is focusing specifically on some in the Ottawa area.

We did it in English and in French with French hearing-impaired children and English hearing-impaired children. We chose only those children who had profound or severe hearing losses. We did not choose any children with any less of a hearing loss simply because we wanted to show how well these kids were doing—the ones with the most acute loss of hearing.

Basically, it is a story of how the children start from diagnosis and go through the preschool years, training for school, and then go into the school system and continue, with the provision of their support services, to graduate from the high school level. Some of the kids who are on

video, particularly the teenagers, talk a little bit about their experiences and their feelings.

I think it is a very useful resource for people on the committee to get a good understanding of what these children have to deal with and how well they can do, given the proper infrastructure of services to help them along.

Without saying too much more about it, I would like to just give you a copy. Perhaps if somebody has a moment, they can hand out a brochure to everyone so you can each have one. It is a very short video. The English is 12 minutes, and the French is 11 minutes, I think. It is the same script for both English and French but with different children.

Madam Chairman: We may have an opportunity at Queen's Park on Thursday to view the film. Perhaps we can request that the machinery be set up when we are back in Toronto. We will have that opportunity.

Mr. Heale: Certainly. If you would like, I am sure our executive director from Toronto, who is here today, Rosemary Pryde, would be able to answer any questions if you would care to have her join you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Rosemary. We already have a set agenda, so we could perhaps talk with the clerk afterwards and see if we can squeeze the film in perhaps either at lunch or perhaps start a few minutes earlier before regular committee hearings begin.

Mr. Heale: That is great. We appreciate it very much.

Madam Chairman: Did you want to continue with your presentation before going on to questions?

Mr. Heale: Yes. I would just like to highlight very briefly some of the concerns and recommendations that we pointed out in the paper that was given to you in advance. We thought if we spent just a couple of minutes on this just to review it, it might be beneficial.

If you want to flip to page 3, the first concern we have is that the approach that most of our children have been using for a number of years now is entitled the auditory-verbal approach. We do have a concern that within Ontario, to our knowledge, very few communities have discrete auditory-verbal programs in place. The only major places where we have seen it are here in Ottawa and certainly in Toronto, where there are three programs at the preschool level which continue into the regular school system.

Voice for Hearing Impaired Children hires an itinerant to work with some families up north.

We send teachers up there. As far as I know, those are the only auditory-verbal programs that provide support services to hearing-impaired children on an individual case basis. There are a few other programs available that provide a similar service to children in a segregated setting.

I guess one of our key concerns is that we have been doing this so long in Ottawa now and we have been very happy with it, we just think the option has to be recognized throughout Ontario and has to become one of the key choices that educators and parents should be able to have for the education of their deaf children. That is basically all we are saying with the first recommendation.

With the second one, we just want to say that certainly in the past 10 years the technology has been developed to diagnose children with hearing loss as early as three months, with the brain stem test that is available now. For hearing-impaired children, the development of good speech and language skills has to begin at the time of diagnosis. Most hearing children develop their basic speech and language skills prior to attending a four-year-old or five-year-old kindergarten program. They have a basis of language skills before entering school. It is essential that all children who are diagnosed as deaf have access to programs to help them develop more normal speech and language skills, beginning at the time of diagnosis.

I do not know whose problem this is and how this can come about, but we do believe that somebody—whether it is the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Health, I really do not know—has to consciously recognize that these children need therapy and help right from the age of diagnosis. They need more programs such as the ones at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and the Hospital for Sick Children, the one in North York and a few others that are around, to get them started and ready for school.

Although many of these services now are provided in hospital settings, they are essentially educational services preparing the child and helping the child learn to listen and talk. Basically, we are saying that somebody has to recognize this and make sure that any child who is diagnosed as deaf at a very early age has access to the option of this service, wherever he may live.

I guess a third concern is that one thing we have seen from school board to school board, and certainly we have a lot of school boards in the Ottawa region, is that services can vary. If your child is in one board, he may get a little more

intensive help than if he is in another board; or if he is in one board, he may be funnelled into a certain program as opposed to another board that may give the child a lot more options in types of programs that he can avail himself of.

We do believe that school boards need to have some type of minimum requirement list that basically tells the boards what are the basic services that have to be provided to hearing-impaired children, such as how many itinerants are needed for how many children in the system, the provision of FM systems in the classroom and that sort of thing.

Boards should be required to provide options to children. We see too many children, particularly in the smaller boards, who are getting very few options. They are channelled into a segregated class because: "We can get a teacher for a segregated class. We cannot get one because there are too few deaf children in the mainstream. So we put them all in one class and then we can get a teacher." I think that is rather sad, because many of these children would do so well in the mainstream and are basically denied the opportunity. That is the thrust of item 3.

1550

We do have a concern about the education of the teachers of the deaf in Ontario. This is a twofold recommendation, I guess. The first point is that we do not have in this province an auditory-verbal training program for teachers of the deaf. The only program that is available within Ontario is the program from the Belleville school for the deaf, and the program there focuses on a total communication approach, which is one of the other major options available to children in Ontario.

What we are finding now is that some of the boards prefer to hire Ontario-trained teachers, and they hire from Belleville. Some of the other boards will hire teachers from McGill University, which does have an auditory-verbal program for a doctorate level. Some of the boards will take teachers with that type of training, but they will not all necessarily do that.

I guess our concern is that teachers trained in that type of approach should be available to all children in Ontario, and there is no reason why they should not be coming out of an Ontario school instead of a Quebec school. We would like to see somebody take a look at that whole area and the possibility of providing a program in Ontario similar to the one in Quebec at McGill.

The second point here is that we sometimes find classroom teachers are inadequately prepared to deal with a hearing-impaired child in

their classes. This is not normally the fault of the teacher, but rather the result of the fact that some of the in-service and professional development courses are not available to that teacher when he or she is faced with a hearing-impaired child in his or her class.

We find some boards do an excellent job in this area. Again, the larger boards, because they have large staffs of special services teachers, develop their own in-service programs and in-service the teachers themselves. They are good programs. However, all boards do not have those resources and therefore cannot provide that type of support to the teacher.

From our perspective, if the ministry were to develop or package programs, perhaps patterned after some of the ones that have been developed by Ontario school boards, then those types of programs and the people to provide that type of service could be available to the smaller boards and those boards that do not have the resources to provide that type of training so that the inequity will be cleaned up. It seems that everybody cannot do it, that all boards are not large enough and do not have the financial resources to do it. It needs to be done, perhaps on a centralized basis, so that everybody can have access to it.

Following along in a similar theme, another concern we have is that schools are not always prepared to provide support services required for the child. Again, this occurs more often with the smaller boards, where things like FM systems in the classroom are not yet the rule, although I must admit that in this area we have not come across any problem providing a child with a system.

Acoustically sound classroom settings, tutors, note-takers, itinerant teachers—and that is a key one—teacher assistants, etc., need be made available as required. This does not mean that all of these children need all of these services. They do not, most of them do not.

The average hearing-impaired child needs an FM system in the classroom and the support service of an itinerant teacher, usually for one to three hours a week, in a withdrawal setting. That is the average. Certainly a teacher who is prepared to have the child in the class is then trained to cope with the needs of the child. Some of the other services we talk about here are services required by only a very few students but should be available where the need arises.

I guess that sums up basically what we wanted to talk about. We did have some other points we wanted to raise, but we thought we would save them for another forum, because they are specific

to detailed services that are provided by boards. There is another study coming up shortly, which is going to look at the education of the deaf in general in Ontario, and I think those issues would be best left for that forum.

I certainly hope that what we have given you today gives you a good overview of the kinds of things that are being done and the successes that we are having and perhaps an indication of a few of the frustrations we do have and might help you in the process of working towards a top-quality educational system for all children in Ontario.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for your presentation today. It certainly, I think, helped make us more aware of the issue. I think one of the statistics you quoted was that one out of every 1,000 Canadian babies is born with a hearing impairment. When you look at that fact, you realize it is important for people to be aware.

As a note before we go to questions from members, I think it was Norah Stoner, the member for Durham West, who introduced a bill in the Legislature in the spring session concerning seeing ear dogs. I think that was one way in which many of the members first really became aware of the problems; so the message is getting out slowly but surely.

Mr. Jackson: You might also want to know of Mr. Johnston's private member's bill, although there are members at this table who did not support him, so it is probably best left unsaid. Right, Mr. Johnston?

Madam Chairman: Since I was not one of the members who did not support him, I do not know about that. Mr. Johnston, would you like to mention your bill? I am sorry, I should have.

Mr. Jackson: In a nonpartisan fashion.

Madam Chairman: In a very nonpartisan fashion, but you are quite right.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The members of Voice know all about it. As they were alluding, I am very hopeful that later this fall the government will make an announcement of what it is going to do and that they will have a chance to have a real input into improving education for hearing-impaired people and putting forward the Voice option as a strong option that the government should look at in terms of what they said today and in more detail. I am delighted they came.

Madam Chairman: As I recall, you made a very impassioned speech in the House which was quite well received.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I thought I was calm that day.

Madam Chairman: We cannot always tell, Mr. Johnston.

The other point I wanted to make is that we mentioned the showing of the film. We had suggested it on Thursday. The clerk said this might be slightly unreasonable. Since she is going to be travelling up to Sudbury with us tomorrow, it may not give us much time to set it up. She suggested that we have the showing in the time we have set aside for the committee later on in our hearings to discuss agenda and the committee report.

Mr. Heale: Okay, that is great. If you get the opportunity to see it, we would very much appreciate it.

Mr. Jackson: I would like to get a copy for my own association in my riding, which means we could have all sorts of copies made. Each caucus has its own video shop.

Mr. Heale: We do have them for sale.

Mrs. Duke: They are for sale. I would be delighted to fill your order.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Jackson, we know you want to help the cause.

1600

Mrs. O'Neill: I am very pleased that you are here today. I know other people's comments in the Legislature have been referred to. I happen to have chosen the hearing-impaired as the subject of my maiden speech, and I am happy that happened. Since then, I have become even closer in touch with many members of the hearing-impaired community and have visited more classrooms because of that speech.

I also had the opportunity to meet a person I am sure you know, Kim Pape from Trent University, who gave a speech at a conference here in Ottawa in April or May, the speech that opened Awareness Week. I was very impressed with her achievements.

I know yours is but one choice, you reiterate that and state its advantages, and I think that certainly is the task you should be about. Please do not feel you have to answer this question if it is an embarrassing one, but I would like to know if most of your members are hearing parents.

Mr. Heale: Most of the members are hearing parents. However, we have several members who are deaf adults, who are very active with us. There are one or two who are deaf parents who have deaf children, but primarily they are hearing parents.

Mrs. O'Neill: Another question for information: You talked about the Carleton and the Ottawa boards of education because you are

talking from this community's perspective. Have the separate boards throughout the province gone in the same manner in the big cities to accept your option in their school systems or is it only in the public school boards that this option is available?

Mr. Heale: In Ottawa, it is available in the separate system. We have 43 children in the separate boards. Sometimes you question whether there are enough services provided by the board, but certainly the option is available and we have kids there doing very well.

Mrs. O'Neill: You touched on another question in your brief that I certainly would like you to say a bit more on because you are the only people who as parents really have this experience. The child is born, the child is diagnosed and that is usually done in a hospital setting, I presume. There is a real need and request on your behalf for more communication, it seems to me, between the ministries of Health and Education. Am I hearing the correct message?

Mr. Heale: Very definitely. The education of these children has to begin at diagnosis. They have to be aided and learn how to listen and to use whatever hearing they have to develop good speech and language skills, which are required in the school system.

Mrs. O'Neill: There must have been some communication somewhere, sometime because, as you know, your disability is the only one that is recognized in the Education Act for early entrance.

Mr. Heale: Yes, I recognize that.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am trying to find out where the breakdown is and where you feel we should be talking to parents or making available to parents the spectrum of services that is available to them.

Mr. Heale: We have chapters that have started up in many areas of the province where the same kinds of services we have in Ottawa and Toronto are not available. I would be happy to have you talk to any of them from Thunder Bay to North Bay to Sarnia to London.

Mrs. O'Neill: Are you saying then that the medical profession is stating these services but the boards find they do not have either the trained personnel or the will to participate in a spectrum of services? I am trying to find out where the breakdown is regarding the spectrum of services.

Mr. Heale: At the preschool level right now, we rely upon the medical profession to provide an auditory-verbal training program in a hospital setting if they are prepared to pay for it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Is it usually a specialized hospital?

Mr. Heale: It is usually a children's hospital. There are four right now, plus the program that we fund ourselves for some of the families up north. The others have not recognized it to the same degree.

There are some preschool programs around but they are not auditory-verbal preschool programs. If a parent in Sarnia wants that service, she goes to Toronto; or they fight to try to get something in Sarnia, which they are still doing.

Mrs. O'Neill: Of course your whole concept is against residential settings.

Mr. Heale: No. We are finding that in Ottawa now. We can use Ottawa as an example because we know it best. About 75 per cent of hearing-impaired children do not need a residential setting or their parents have not chosen a residential setting, whatever the reason is. Some kids still are going to a residential school. In some cases that is appropriate. In fact, some of our programs have recommended that children switch to a different approach.

What we are saying is that over the past 12 or 14 years here in Ottawa, we have found that the vast majority of the children do very well in the regular school system with the appropriate support services in place and that that option is working so well that it should be available everywhere. But that does not mean every child should be put through that option. It is an option, and other ones should also be available where the need arises.

Mrs. O'Neill: You feel the knowledge of the options should start with the faculties of education and there should be support—I am trying to find out exactly where you feel the weaknesses are in this whole system—and that the Ministry of Education should be encouraging boards to provide an option. I guess this is where Mr. Johnston mentioned you are going to have input into the review that is now taking place.

Mr. Heale: Yes, that is true. At the preschool level as well. Maybe in co-operation with the Ministry of Health, I do not know. Usually the way the clinics work now is that you have the habilitationist, who is the teacher, with the ENT, the ear-nose-throat specialist, with the audiologist; and with the social worker occasionally if that is needed. They work as a team.

Mrs. O'Neill: Please pursue this very complex issue and help those of us in the Legislature to help you.

Mr. Heale: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: I must really apologize today. They say to err is human and your chairman has been extremely human this afternoon. First of all, she ignored—well, she did not ignore; she just simply forgot about Mr. Johnston's outstanding work—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: She was blinded by my gleam.

Madam Chairman: That is right. I was so busy watching his gleam, I forgot about it.

Second, apparently, according to the vice-chairman, who is usually quite correct, I called them "seeing ear dogs" instead of "hearing ear dogs." I apologize for that oversight as well. It has been a long day. It has been a long year actually.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I can see you after Sudbury tomorrow night.

Madam Chairman: He does not speak from experience, by the way.

I would very much like to thank you for your presentation today and, as I say, for making us aware of a number of the issues.

Mr. Heale: We would like to thank you again for having us. We do appreciate the opportunity.

Mrs. Duke: I would just like to say that if eventually you do get to view the video and if you have some reaction to it, that would be nice to get.

Mr. Jackson: I have already reacted to the price.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Jackson is still in shock.

Mr. Heale: We are just trying to pay the cost of it with the distribution of it.

Madam Chairman: It is certainly a worthwhile cause, Mr. Jackson, right?

Mr. Jackson: Actually we are working with a couple of groups trying to get to that funding level. Our basic problem is finding someone to make the video.

Mrs. Duke: That was our problem too.

Madam Chairman: That concludes the hearings of the select committee in Ottawa. We now move on to Sudbury. Prior to our catching our flight, I would like to remind members to be at the front doors at 5:30 so that we may catch the flight to Toronto so that we may catch the flight to Sudbury.

Mrs. Duke: You have to go to Toronto to get anywhere.

Mrs. O'Neill: I do not believe that, living in Ottawa, but this is what these people in Toronto tell me.

Madam Chairman: Unfortunately, the 10-seater that flies directly to Sudbury is full. The

select committee on education stands adjourned until 9:30 tomorrow morning in Sudbury.

The committee adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

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No. E-18

Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Organization of the Education Process

First Session, 34th Parliament
Wednesday, September 21, 1988



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, September 21, 1988

The committee met at 10:08 a.m. in the Trafalgar Room, Peter Piper Inn, Sudbury, Ontario.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. Welcome to the select committee on education. We are very pleased to be in Sudbury this morning. In fact, it looked dubious last night whether we were ever actually going to get to Sudbury, but fortunately our flight did finally arrive. We have a number of presenters this morning.

Nous accueillons, pour notre première présentation, un groupe qui va faire sa présentation en français. Venez vous installer devant le microphone, s'il vous plaît. Bienvenue à notre comité. Vous avez 30 minutes pour votre présentation.

Now I see a number of members wincing heavily, so I shall switch to English, just so you understand what I just said. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation, and we do have interpreters here. A number of the members will ask questions in French and a number of others will ask questions in English, if that is convenient for you.

Thank you very much. Begin whenever you are ready. We hope you will allow enough time in your 30 minutes for questions from the members. Would you please just begin by introducing yourself for the purposes of Hansard?

ÉCOLE DES SCIENCES DE L'ÉDUCATION, UNIVERSITÉ LAURENTIENNE

M. Tremblay: Je suis Onésime Tremblay. Je suis présentement adjoint au directeur de l'École des sciences de l'éducation de l'université Laurentienne. J'aimerais tout d'abord présenter mes collègues, M^{me} Mignonne Larocque, professeur, et le docteur Georges Duquette, aussi professeur.

À titre de professeur à l'École des sciences de l'éducation de l'université Laurentienne, nous désirons remercier les membres du Comité spécial de l'éducation de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de nous fournir l'occasion de leur faire connaître nos observations, nos commen-

taires et nos recommandations en ce qui a trait à l'étude du système d'éducation en Ontario.

L'École des sciences de l'éducation de l'université Laurentienne, autrefois connue sous le nom d'École normale de Sudbury, a comme mandat d'offrir les programmes suivants: un programme de Bachelier ès arts avec concentration en éducation et un programme de Bachelier en éducation et de formation initiale conduisant à l'obtention du brevet d'enseignement en Ontario — cycles primaire, moyen et intermédiaire.

Au cours du dernier quart de siècle, l'école a assumé la responsabilité de la formation initiale et continue de milliers d'enseignants et d'enseignantes qui oeuvrent dans les écoles de langue française de la province. Un certain nombre d'entre eux ont opté pour l'enseignement du français, langue seconde, afin de répondre aux besoins des classes d'immersion.

Nous désirons attirer votre attention sur le fait que, malheureusement, l'École n'est pas autorisée à offrir le programme de formation initiale, cycle supérieur, qui conduit à l'obtention d'un brevet valide pour l'enseignement dans les classes de langue française de onzième, douzième et treizième année. Vous conviendrez, avec nous, que cette situation est anormale et doit être rectifiée le plus tôt possible afin de donner des chances égales en répondant adéquatement à tous les besoins des enseignants, des conseils scolaires et de la population de langue française des régions deux, trois, quatre et cinq du ministère de l'Éducation.

Tout prochainement, l'École des sciences de l'éducation a l'intention de soumettre à nouveau une requête à la ministre des Collèges et Universités (M^{me} McLeod) afin d'obtenir l'autorisation d'offrir le programme de formation initiale à l'enseignement, option trois, cycle supérieur. Nous comptons donc sur vos bons offices et sur votre appui dans ce domaine pour concrétiser un projet qui sera particulièrement bénéfique à la population francophone des régions précitées.

Au cours du mois de juillet, le Comité spécial de l'éducation de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario a revu la philosophie de l'éducation dans notre province et a examiné les buts et objectifs qui s'y rapportent afin de fournir à chaque élève des chances égales dans la vie.

Aujourd'hui, nous voulons examiner avec vous la dimension organisationnelle du processus éducatif et, plus particulièrement, les aspects suivants: la répartition des élèves par niveaux; les promotions par année de cours; les semestres; le document intitulé «Les Écoles de l'Ontario au cycles intermédiaire et supérieur»; et, finalement, le dépistage des décrocheurs potentiels, l'aide à leur apporter et le rôle de l'École des sciences de l'éducation.

Dr Duquette: Il est bon de mentionner à ce moment-ci qu'il existe plusieurs références dans la prochaine section qui appuient les idées que nous allons proposer. Toutefois, les références ne seront pas citées dans la lecture même, afin de faciliter la compréhension du texte.

1. La répartition des élèves par niveaux: Il n'y a aucun doute qu'un enfant peut, dans certaines circonstances, bénéficier des effets de ce qu'on appelle le groupement hétérogène, ou «mainstreaming». Cependant, malgré la popularité de ce mouvement, certains experts nous rappellent qu'il existe des dangers très sérieux pour l'enfant qui est intégré dans un milieu sans d'abord prendre soin que la transition soit graduelle, que l'acceptation soit chaleureuse et authentique et que le succès puisse couronner ses efforts. Promouvoir l'idée qu'un classement hétérogène sera meilleur pour tous et en toute circonstance est une généralisation dangereuse dont nous devons nous méfier, surtout en éducation.

Tenant compte des nombreuses recherches que nous connaissons, nous désirons indiquer clairement notre désaccord avec les recommandations 27, 28 et 29 du rapport Radwanski, qui semble prendre un recul pour tenter d'entreprendre des réformes à base de croyances et de mythes populaires des milieux politiques, au lieu de le faire en harmonie avec les leçons tirées de l'expérience cumulative dans l'enseignement et les études ou recherches déjà connues.

Nous n'avons qu'à penser aux nombreuses études des dernières années pour nous en convaincre. De nouvelles études en psychologie cognitive illustrent bien le fait qu'il existe des différences individuelles par rapport à la programmation génétique et celle de l'environnement de chacun d'entre nous. Par conséquent, nos aptitudes et nos expériences sont différentes. Notre organisation cérébrale, nos stratégies d'apprentissage, nos systèmes de référence et nos intérêts ne sont pas les mêmes. En salle de classe, tenter d'uniformiser l'apprentissage dans une seule perspective plutôt que de le diversifier et de travailler avec l'initiative individuelle des

étudiants, est d'aller à l'encontre de ce que privilégient de nombreuses études.

Gibson et Chandler nous renseignent sur différentes recherches qui appuient le travail en groupes. D'autres démontrent que les enfants qui dépendent davantage des plans visuel et contextuel pour apprendre sont plus aptes à réussir au niveau abstrait et académique. Les enfants peuvent être différents selon leurs préférences pour un enseignement structuré ou non structuré, une approche pédagogique particulière, le travail individuel ou le travail en groupe, un environnement de silence ou de présence sonore pour étudier.

Nous devons adapter nos programmes éducationnels aux besoins des étudiants, et ces besoins, en règle générale, correspondent assez bien aux besoins de notre société. Comme ils apprennent à vivre en cette société, il est vrai de dire que les étudiants doivent pouvoir évoluer dans un milieu scolaire qui reflète la réalité du monde dans lequel ils sont appelés à vivre.

La répartition des étudiants par niveaux, si elle est bien faite, doit fournir à l'étudiant l'environnement le plus propice à favoriser son développement. Par contre, tout étudiant doit avoir l'occasion de se mêler à ses pairs, tout en évoluant dans un milieu où il se sent à l'aise. Vouloir remplacer la compartimentation des étudiants de l'école secondaire dans des cours de niveaux avancé, général et fondamental par une voie unique non différenciée pour tous les étudiants serait certainement un retour vers une façon de faire qui, d'après les expériences vécues dans le passé, produirait encore un plus grand nombre de décrocheurs. La répartition des étudiants, qu'elle soit homogène à certains moments ou hétérogène à d'autres, doit toujours faciliter l'apprentissage que fait l'étudiant. Éliminer les niveaux tout simplement ne serait certainement pas avantageux pour tous.

À cause d'un manque de motivation, certains étudiants préfèrent ne pas fréquenter l'école et n'attendent que l'âge réglementaire pour l'abandonner. Il ne faut pas considérer chaque abandon scolaire comme un échec en soi. Pour certains individus, c'est mettre fin à des expériences négatives où ils ont vécu l'échec année après année. L'abandon scolaire est pour eux l'expression de leur ardent désir de changer de milieu afin de pouvoir grandir davantage.

Il faut avouer que notre société a toujours privilégié le programme académique comparativement aux programmes commercial ou technique. À notre avis, l'école secondaire doit offrir l'éventail des programmes, même si certains sont

plus coûteux. Autrement, elle ne fera que favoriser l'éducation de certains qui réussissent au détriment des autres et, ainsi, l'augmentation du nombre de décrocheurs. C'est pourquoi les programmes coopératifs ou les cours à l'école et les expériences pratiques dans le monde du travail qui favorisent l'apprentissage doivent se multiplier de façon à répondre aux besoins des décrocheurs potentiels.

2. La promotion par année de cours: Le document ministériel intitulé «Les Écoles de l'Ontario aux cycles intermédiaire et supérieur» semblait vouloir permettre à chaque étudiant de progresser à son propre rythme en lui accordant un crédit pour chaque matière au programme où il a démontré un apprentissage satisfaisant. Plusieurs recommandations contenues dans le rapport Radwanski semblent vouloir faire le contraire en déterminant le contenu des programmes au niveau provincial et en établissant des contrôles au moyen de tests ministériels pour normaliser, au lieu d'individualiser, l'éducation. Les études nous démontrent les dangers sérieux qui se posent par rapport aux tests standardisés, surtout pour les minorités linguistiques, telles que les francophones.

De l'autre côté, les recommandations neuf, dix et onze semblent s'attarder au bien-être des étudiants dans l'acquisition des connaissances qui leur permettront de répondre aux attentes des tests ministériels. Même si ces recommandations sont louables en soi, il faut ajouter que le coût de leur mise en oeuvre peut être prohibitif. Elles diffèrent beaucoup de celles qui veulent que le succès de l'entreprise scolaire et des apprenants soit mesuré exclusivement par les résultats académiques de ces derniers.

Dans notre monde contemporain, il faut avouer que le succès d'une vie ne se mesure pas seulement d'après les résultats académiques des individus, et encore moins par les résultats de tests standardisés. Plusieurs affirment que la tendance à contrôler l'apprentissage dans les salles de classe par des tests ministériels à la grandeur de la province risque de causer interférence et nuire aux enseignants et enseignantes, aussi bien qu'aux étudiants ou étudiantes, plutôt que de les aider.

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Nous croyons sincèrement qu'au palier secondaire, l'obtention de crédits constitue la façon la plus pratique de tenir compte du progrès continu de l'étudiant en respectant son rythme d'apprentissage. Au palier secondaire, il ne faut certes pas revenir à la promotion par année de cours.

3. Les semestres: L'expérience vécue au sein des écoles secondaires qui opèrent sur une base semestrielle est plutôt nouvelle et ne peut pas constituer comme telle la base sur laquelle peut reposer des recommandations pour orienter l'avenir.

Les commentaires reçus de la part des étudiants, des enseignants et des parents semblent favorables à ce que l'expérience soit continuée, compte tenu des avantages qui en découlent pour tous les intervenants. Par contre, certains enseignants et enseignantes expérimentés et compétents affirment confidentiellement que l'apprentissage, et surtout l'acquisition de connaissances, sont plus limités, même si, à toutes fins utiles, le nombre d'heures allouées à l'apprentissage dans une matière est le même que dans une école où le programme s'échelonne sur toute l'année scolaire.

Devant cet état de choses, nous croyons qu'il est bon de poursuivre l'expérience. Par contre, nous pensons qu'il serait des plus souhaitable que le ministère de l'Éducation commande une ou plusieurs recherches qui pourraient apporter un éclairage sur les avantages et les inconvénients qui découlent de cette orientation organisationnelle. Par exemple, certains enseignants et enseignantes prétendent que l'apprentissage du français, langue maternelle, aurait avantage à avoir lieu tout au long de l'année scolaire afin d'assurer la continuité du processus. Il faut avouer que cette affirmation n'est, pour le moment, qu'un commentaire qui mérite d'être infirmé ou confirmé.

4. Les Écoles de l'Ontario aux cycles intermédiaire et supérieur: La mise en oeuvre de cette ligne de conduite ministérielle a débuté en 1984 seulement. Il serait prématuré de faire l'évaluation d'EOCIS à ce moment-ci. Tout nous porte à croire que la philosophie de l'éducation au palier secondaire, telle qu'énoncée dans ce document ministériel, reflète beaucoup plus les nouvelles écoles de pensée psychopédagogiques et les études du XX^e siècle, qui ont remis en question l'école structuraliste des années 30 pour essayer d'en redéfinir les priorités et qui, en dernière analyse, doivent toujours être en fonction de l'étudiant, de l'apprenant qui essaie de développer tout son potentiel en fonction de ses besoins et de ceux de la société qui lui lance ce défi.

Mais il faut d'abord viser à l'épanouissement de chaque individu en accordant de l'importance aux divers aspects de son développement psychomoteur, affectif, social et moral aussi bien que cognitif. C'est pourquoi ce processus est

aussi important dans son apprentissage que l'acquisition de nouvelles connaissances.

Nous croyons qu'il serait prudent de ne pas apporter de changements trop drastiques au palier secondaire pour le moment. Il y aurait sans doute lieu de continuer la mise en oeuvre du document EOCIS afin d'évaluer cette pratique administrative du processus éducatif sur une période d'au moins dix ans. Une étude par des chercheurs spécialisés dans le domaine de l'éducation pourrait sans doute apporter un éclairage qui tiendrait compte non seulement des inquiétudes de ceux et celles qui sont préoccupés par les questions qui s'y rapportent, mais aussi des inquiétudes des étudiants et des parents qui, en dernière analyse, paient la note des services dont ils ont besoin et auxquels ils ont droit.

Mme Larocque: 5. Le dépistage des décrocheurs potentiels: Comme école de formation initiale et continue pour les enseignants oeuvrant dans les écoles de langue française, l'École des sciences de l'éducation veut travailler en étroite collaboration avec tous ceux et celles qu'elle a aidé à former comme professionnels de l'enseignement.

Compte tenu de cette collaboration que l'École veut entretenir avec les responsables de l'éducation dans le milieu, nous croyons opportun de mentionner le travail du professeur Claire Beauchemin de l'École des sciences de l'éducation en ce qui a trait au dépistage des décrocheurs potentiels. Cette dernière a effectué, entre 1983 et 1987, une étude longitudinale sur le dépistage des décrocheurs potentiels dans les écoles secondaires de langue française de la région de Sudbury. Cette recherche a été subventionnée par le Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada.

En annexe A, vous trouverez un court article à ce sujet, paru dans la revue *Entre Nous* en mars 1988, publiée par l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens.

Nous croyons que cette étude est très opportune, compte tenu de la préoccupation du Ministère et des conseils scolaires à réduire le nombre de décrocheurs en les dépistant assez tôt pour leur fournir à temps l'aide dont ils ont besoin. Ce travail d'adaptation à la population franco-ontarienne et de validation du questionnaire «L'école, ça m'intéresse», élaboré par le ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, ne doit pas être relégué aux oubliettes mais doit servir à dépister les décrocheurs potentiels et à formuler un programme d'aide individualisée.

Nous tenons à souligner le fait que les écoles responsables de la formation des enseignants

doivent faire preuve d'initiative et de créativité afin de réduire le plus possible les conséquences d'une pénurie d'enseignants dûment qualifiés pour les écoles de langue française. Ceci est d'autant plus difficile que l'année de formation initiale est déjà plutôt courte et qu'il y a lieu de modifier les programmes qui existent présentement si nous voulons répondre plus adéquatement aux besoins des futurs enseignants et de leurs étudiants.

Voici quelques recommandations que nous désirons soumettre à votre bienveillante attention:

Premièrement, que les décisions ministérielles sur les changements à apporter dans le domaine de l'éducation s'appuient sur des études ou des recherches qui ont été effectuées par des experts en éducation plutôt que sur des observations, des commentaires, des opinions ou même des recommandations de la part de personnes qui n'auront pas à subir directement les conséquences des changements qu'ils préconisent;

Deuxièmement, que le ministère de l'Éducation continue à faire en sorte que les programmes d'études répondent davantage aux besoins des étudiants en leur fournissant d'abord la possibilité de développer leurs compétences avec succès, tout en recevant l'aide nécessaire dans les domaines qui sont importants pour eux et où ils sont plus faibles;

Troisièmement, que l'échantillonnage des écoles pour l'administration, en 1988-1989, des tests ministériels au niveau de la sixième année ne soit pas de 100 écoles pour chaque groupe de langue officielle au Canada mais qu'il soit plus proportionnel à la population représentée. Autrement, les écoles de langue française seront saturées de tests ministériels;

Quatrièmement, que le Ministère encourage les conseils à développer des programmes coopératifs afin que les étudiants puissent s'intégrer plus facilement au monde du travail;

Cinquièmement, que le Ministère accentue davantage l'importance des programmes commerciaux et techniques et encourage les conseils scolaires à en offrir toute la gamme;

Sixièmement, que le Ministère subventionne adéquatement les conseils scolaires pour leur permettre d'offrir les programmes dont il est fait mention dans les recommandations cinq et six, tout en les rendant imputables aux subventions reçues à ces fins;

Septièmement, que le ministère de l'Éducation confie à l'École des sciences de l'éducation de l'université Laurentienne la responsabilité de familiariser tous les directeurs et directrices et

orienteurs d'écoles secondaires de langue française de l'Ontario avec le questionnaire révisé «L'école, ça m'intéresse» et de les sensibiliser à l'utilisation de ce questionnaire, tout en considérant les huit dimensions qui s'avèrent significatives comme point de départ du programme d'aide individualisée à l'intention des décrocheurs potentiels. Un tel projet, subventionné par le ministère de l'Éducation, pourrait tirer profit de l'expertise de personnes-ressources comme le professeur Beauchemin, tout en répondant de façon pratique aux besoins des décrocheurs francophones;

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Huitièmement, que les écoles responsables de la formation initiale et continue des enseignants soient habilitées à répondre adéquatement aux besoins des conseils scolaires et que, particulièrement, l'École des sciences de l'éducation de l'université Laurentienne soit autorisée à offrir le programme de formation initiale, option trois, cycle supérieur.

Conclusion: Nous vous remercions de votre bienveillante attention. Nous espérons que votre comité saura considérer nos observations et nos recommandations. Nous demeurons disponibles si le Comité juge opportun d'y donner suite.

Mme la Présidente: Merci pour votre présentation. Nous avons quelques minutes pour des questions. Nous commencerons avec M. Johnston et puis M^{me} O'Neill.

M. R. F. Johnston: Merci. Le mémoire était bien fait et important pour nous.

J'ai quelques questions. Premièrement, je voudrais en savoir plus au sujet de l'école. Combien de professeurs ont eu de l'expérience dans les salles de classe de la province de l'Ontario?

M. Tremblay: Je vais laisser mes collègues répondre. Moi, je suis à l'École des sciences depuis seulement un mois et demi; je suis un débutant.

Mme Larocque: Je ne sais pas si j'ai bien saisi votre question. Demandez-vous combien de professeurs nouveaux nous avons?

M. R. F. Johnston: Combien de professeurs, et aussi combien d'entre eux ont enseigné récemment aux niveaux secondaire ou élémentaire.

Mme Larocque: Récemment? Eh bien, Dr Duquette est un des plus récents.

Dr Duquette: Je pense que votre question est: combien de professeurs y a-t-il à l'École des sciences de l'éducation?

M. R. F. Johnston: Oui.

Mme Larocque: Il y en a quatorze.

M. R. F. Johnston: Combien de professeurs ont, comme vous, de l'expérience dans le système d'éducation?

Mme Larocque: Je dirais qu'une bonne moitié en ont.

M. R. F. Johnston: Récemment? Une chose qui ressort des discussions qui ont eu lieu à Toronto, c'est qu'il y a un problème dans les écoles qui participent à la formation des enseignants: il n'y a pas eu de bonnes expériences dans le système récemment.

Mme Larocque: Mais nous maintenons quand même des contacts; nos élèves font de l'enseignement pratique, et le contact est là.

Dr Duquette: Je pourrais peut-être ajouter à cela. Pour ma part, j'ai douze ans d'expérience dans les écoles publiques. J'ai un doctorat quand même récent de 1986 et, il n'y a pas tellement longtemps, j'enseignais dans les écoles pour toujours rester en contact avec les étudiants.

Je pense qu'une bonne majorité des professeurs de l'École des sciences de l'éducation sont qualifiés dans la recherche, ou ils ont beaucoup d'expérience dans la salle de classe. Alors, je dirais que la moitié ont de l'expérience, et alors ensemble, on tente de donner une expertise qui se complète.

M. R. F. Johnston: Merci.

M. Tremblay: Je pourrais peut-être ajouter ceci: une des raisons qui fait que, à l'École des sciences de l'éducation de l'université Laurentienne, la majorité des professeurs ont une expérience plutôt aux niveaux primaire, moyen et intermédiaire, c'est que l'École est mandatée pour offrir les programmes simplement à ces trois niveaux. Si, un jour, l'École des sciences de l'éducation était autorisée à offrir l'option trois, cycle supérieur, automatiquement il nous faudrait embaucher du personnel avec une expérience plus accentuée au palier secondaire.

Je vais mentionner une petite expérience vécue depuis quelques semaines. Un de mes collègues de l'École des sciences de l'éducation, qui n'a peut-être pas eu autant d'expérience pratique dans la salle de classe que d'autres, m'a demandé de lui organiser des stages auxquels il pourrait aller se familiariser avec l'enseignement à tous les niveaux. J'ai déjà pris des moyens pour lui faciliter cette expérience qui, d'après moi, sera enrichissante pour lui et pour ses étudiants.

M. R. F. Johnston: J'ai une question concernant le débat sur les classes hétérogènes ou homogènes. Maintenant, principalement au ni-

veau élémentaire, on voit des classes hétérogènes et les élèves sont groupés selon leurs compétences dans ces classes-là. Nous avons entendu l'avis de quelques groupes qui pensent qu'il vaudrait peut-être mieux enseigner en utilisant une seule méthode aux neuvième et dixième années et ne pas avoir seulement le système de crédits et de «streaming» qu'on voit maintenant. Quel est votre avis sur cette question?

Dr Duquette: Cette question prend en considération le fait que chaque étudiant a des compétences qui lui sont propres et que nous voulons développer ces compétences-là. Essayer de rendre cela tout homogène et donner un enseignement qui s'applique à tous, c'est un peu une généralisation qui se fait très rapidement. Peut-être que les intentions sont bonnes, mais elles ne prennent pas en considération les divers besoins et les diverses compétences des étudiants qui sont en cours.

Nous savons par le passé, par exemple, surtout par ce qui a découlé de l'approche structuraliste des années 20 et 30, que beaucoup d'étudiants ont souffert de cette approche-là, beaucoup plus qu'il y en a aujourd'hui qui bénéficient du fait que les programmes sont mieux adaptés à leurs besoins et accentuent leurs compétences avant de leur dire: «Écoutez, vous avez un échec ici. Vous échouez parce que vous ne réussissez pas comme les autres». C'est une chose que de commencer à comparer les étudiants entre eux; mais avant de faire cela et de dire que certains étudiants réussissent mieux que d'autres, il faut dire aux étudiants: «Vous avez vous-mêmes des compétences qui vous sont propres et que d'autres personnes n'ont pas; comme les autres ont des compétences qui leur sont propres et que vous, vous devez encore développer». On doit débiter à partir de forces plutôt que de faiblesses.

M. R. F. Johnston: Mais avec chaque méthode, on parle de la possibilité d'aider chaque étudiant dans son propre programme et selon ses compétences.

Ma question est la suivante: au niveau élémentaire maintenant, il y a des classes hétérogènes; dans le système secondaire, il y a un système de classement homogène. On dit «homogène»; j'ai des problèmes avec ce concept. Mais quelques-uns pensent que les jeunes de treize ou de quatorze ans sont peut-être trop jeunes pour être admis dans une classe de niveau «vocational», ou technique, par exemple. Ils veulent avoir une continuation du système élémentaire pour au moins un an, et peut-être deux ans, au niveau secondaire.

M. Tremblay: Sur ce point-là, j'oserais dire que, si les écoles dites intermédiaires, qui étaient populaires il y a environ quinze ou 20 ans, avaient connu tout le succès qu'on en espérait, probablement qu'aujourd'hui nous aurions des écoles intermédiaires qui regrouperaient les élèves de septième, huitième, neuvième et dixième année et où vous pourriez retrouver une organisation telle que celle que vous venez de décrire.

Je pense qu'il y aurait de nombreux avantages puisque la transition entre le primaire et le secondaire serait plus graduelle. Par exemple, j'ai un peu de difficulté à voir des élèves de douze, treize et quatorze ans qui, à l'école primaire, ne connaissent qu'un enseignant et qui, l'année suivante, doivent envisager cinq ou six professeurs et s'adapter à chacun d'eux. D'après moi, si nous pouvions avoir des écoles où, aux septième et huitième années, nous avions une rotation mitigée, cela faciliterait la transition aux neuvième et dixième années.

Encore là, je pense que c'est une question qui mérite notre attention en tant qu'éducateurs, et si le gouvernement voulait faire une évaluation d'EOCIS, telle que nous la connaissons, je pense que cette considération mériterait notre attention.

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Mme la Présidente: Monsieur Johnston, deux autres personnes ont des questions, s'il vous plaît: M^{me} O'Neill et M. Furlong.

Just so there is no misunderstanding by the members, I will say it in English. We have run out of time. Would you keep your questions very brief?

Mrs. O'Neill: I thank you very much for your brief. As you know, your institution is unique in the province, and certainly it is very good that you made the effort to present a brief.

I want to be clear, because you did highlight this twice, I think. At the moment, your students can gain certification only in primary, junior and intermediate. Is that correct?

Mr. Tremblay: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: So they would not be qualified to teach at the senior level, and that is a request you are making.

Mr. Tremblay: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. I just wanted to get that on the record to be sure I understood it.

The other area, and I was really happy and maybe it was just extremely good translation, but I felt a new sensitivity to the student who finds it necessary to leave school, drop out. I felt you gave a positive attitude to the motivation that a

person may have in doing that. It often is that we hear that term used only in the negative.

I guess what I would like to ask you is to tell us a little more about what you are doing at your college regarding training teachers to work in co-operative programs, first of all, because that does seem to be an area that is certainly coming on stream and where a great many students are finding satisfaction. Then second, I guess somewhat tied to it, what are your facilities at the moment or your capabilities regarding training teachers in technical subjects?

You may answer in French and I will put my ears back on.

M. Tremblay: Je vais commencer par votre dernière question. En fait, notre école, même si c'est un très bel édifice, n'a pas les installations jugées nécessaires, à mon point de vue, pour véritablement former des enseignants dans le domaine technique. Si le Ministère nous autorise à offrir le cycle supérieur, il faudra certainement que l'Université considère l'aménagement de locaux qui pourront mieux répondre aux besoins. À cause du nombre limité d'élèves que nous connaissons présentement, l'édifice que nous occupons sert aussi à d'autres disciplines, telles que le commerce et l'éducation physique. Nous espérons que le nombre d'élèves augmentera au point où nous pourrions occuper tout l'édifice et faire en sorte qu'il réponde mieux aux besoins de la formation des enseignants.

L'autre question était...

Mrs. O'Neill: Regarding co-operative education, if you are trying to work with the student teachers.

M. Tremblay: Oui. Comme vous le savez, ces programmes d'éducation coopérative sont de date très récente, et certains conseils scolaires ont donné suite à ces projets. Mais il faut avouer que les conseils craignent beaucoup que les subventions qui sont données à cette fin soient de courte durée et ils hésitent à s'aventurer trop loin.

Actuellement, nous n'avons pas entrepris de programme spécialisé dans le domaine; mais comme l'École des sciences veut se rapprocher de plus en plus des écoles primaires et secondaires dans les milieux, c'est certainement un domaine où nous essayerons de collaborer avec les écoles pour aider à la formation des enseignants qui acceptent de telles responsabilités, afin de répondre aux besoins des étudiants. J'ai l'impression que ce sera une composante qui se rapprochera de l'option trois, cycle supérieur.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you very much.

M. Furlong: J'ai deux très courtes questions, seulement à titre d'information.

Premièrement, y a-t-il une raison pour laquelle l'Université n'a pas de cours pour les onzième, douzième et treizième années?

M. Tremblay: Je vais être bien honnête avec vous tous. Ayant été président du Conseil de l'éducation franco-ontarienne pendant une période de six ans, je peux vous dire que le Conseil s'était penché sur cette question il y a au moins quatre ans, l'avait étudiée très attentivement et avait fait une recommandation à M^{me} Stephenson, ministre à l'époque. La réponse de M^{me} la Ministre à ce moment-là était que cette question relevait du Ministère et qu'il fallait avoir une entente entre la Faculté d'éducation de l'Université d'Ottawa et l'École des sciences de l'éducation de Sudbury, par l'entremise de l'université Laurentienne, afin qu'il n'y ait pas une concurrence qui serait au détriment des étudiants. Comme vous pouvez le comprendre, le bassin de professeurs qui voudraient se qualifier pour le niveau supérieur est quand même limité.

Ce que nous proposons à l'École des sciences de l'éducation, c'est un travail en collaboration avec la Faculté d'éducation pour que les deux institutions puissent offrir des programmes mais collaborer lorsqu'il s'agit de spécialisation dans certaines disciplines. Je sais pertinemment que les recteurs des deux universités ont correspondu pendant quelque temps, mais cela n'a pas donné de résultats.

M. Furlong: Ma deuxième question, encore à titre d'information: j'ai été surpris par la recommandation trois, dans laquelle vous dites que les tests provinciaux qui auront lieu aux écoles francophones feront que ces écoles seront « saturées de tests ministériels ». Je devrais avoir les statistiques à ce sujet, mais je ne les ai pas. Est-ce que vous pouvez me donner le nombre d'écoles francophones en Ontario?

M. Tremblay: Eh bien, si vous tenez compte de la population globale de l'Ontario, la population de langue française représente entre cinq et sept pour cent. Cela dépend des statisticiens et de qui fait le recensement; vous en avez entendu parler, je suppose. Dire que vous allez administrer des tests ministériels et que vous allez choisir 100 écoles de langue française pour 100 écoles de langue anglaise, c'est une proportion qui est loin d'être juste; et vous pouvez comprendre que, si vous choisissez 100 écoles de langue française, chaque fois qu'il y a des tests ministériels, il sera très souvent à leur tour. Si le gouvernement veut être généreux envers sa minorité, il ne le sera pas en matière de tests ministériels, il le sera dans le domaine des services à offrir.

M. Furlong: Merci.

M. R. F. Johnston: Si on utilise le nombre 100 dans la section francophone, ça représente quel pourcentage de ses écoles?

M. Tremblay: Eh bien, je dirais qu'à Sudbury même, dans le système d'écoles catholiques, ça représenterait 25 pour cent des écoles.

Mme la Présidente: Merci pour votre présentation. Vous avez bien contribué à notre comité aujourd'hui. Merci.

Our next presentation will be by the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. Please come forward. Good morning and welcome to our committee. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation. As you have just seen from the last group, we do not always adhere to the time frame but we try to, otherwise we keep a number of our deputations waiting.

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LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO, SUDBURY CHAPTER

Dr. Calmain: I am familiar with the flexibility of the format.

I would like to correct one point, though. I am not representing the Ontario association; I am representing the Sudbury association. That is significant because it is my understanding that the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario already submitted a brief to this committee and made a presentation.

I have a copy of it. I have read it and we are in such thorough agreement here in the Sudbury Association of Learning Disabilities that we find it makes ours somewhat supernumerary. Some of the points that are addressed in our provincial association's brief, we simply accept and refer this committee to the excellent presentation that was made by the provincial association.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for that clarification. I wonder if you would begin by introducing yourself for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

Dr. Calmain: My name is Dr. Ken Calmain. At the present time I am an academic at Laurentian University and have been for the last eight or nine years. I have a background of research. I have done a number of reports in the correctional field and in the social planning area for the government of Ontario.

Before that I was a member of Senator Croll's poverty committee in Ottawa and a member of our professional association of social workers in Ottawa, where I edited the journal of the association. Before that I was in the correctional

field, where I was director of the family court in Manitoba. Before that I was in the commercial world, where I was claims manager for a national insurance company.

That is my history. As you will note, the most significant one for the moment is the presidency of the LDA of Sudbury. Related to that, I am also chairman of the special education advisory committee to the Sudbury Board of Education here. That is who I am.

Our association is a small one here. It has about 50 parent members and a number of other professional members; that is to say, psychologists, physicians and so forth. One of the memberships includes a private school which itself has 50 parent members, children members—family members. As you can see, it is not a very large organization.

We have tried in this brief to point up local concerns where possible, but only with the intent of augmenting the much more sophisticated, well-thought-out references of the provincial association's brief. If I may, I will just present this brief to you now.

Our provincial association, the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, has already presented a brief to the select committee on education. We wish to associate ourselves with the 27 sensible recommendations of that brief while making a few further observations in the development of some of them.

There is a kind of confusion about the two terms "mainstreaming" and "streaming" that we thought it might be well to look at briefly. It seems to require some clarification. As we understand it, the term "mainstreaming" refers primarily to a viewpoint supportive of bringing some excluded exceptional children into the regular classroom or mainstream. This might include the blind, some orthopaedically disabled children, some other physically disabled children and a variety of other types. The other term, "streaming," refers, as we understand it, to the division in the secondary level between basic, general and advanced levels. We will discuss them in that order, although at some points they do overlap.

In respect to the first type of mainstreaming, we wish to distinguish between the needs of the groups we mentioned—the blind, the orthopaedically disabled children, etc.—and the needs of the learning-disabled population. For many forms of disability, the kinds of required support are relatively self-evident. A wheelchair, for example, may be required and, accordingly, the necessary space

requirements and accommodations can be made so that the child can attend regular classes.

In the learning-disabled population, however, it is more common that the requirements are demanding, difficult and, unfortunately, quite often expensive. Since LD is by nature an invisible condition, all LD children are initially mainstreamed—that is, a part of regular classes—until someone—parents, teachers or others—recognizes some of the more common signs: significant disparities in achievement in various areas. For example, the child may have considerable verbal capacity, yet be notably slow in learning to read or write.

The task, then, is to obtain a proper assessment of the child's difficulty with an eye to removing him or her from the mainstream or sufficiently modifying it to gain the conditions in which the learning can progress. Without that, there will be little or no learning progress. At the risk of stating the obvious, it is senseless to leave a child in the mainstream if he or she has, say, dyslexia and cannot follow reading or the work on the blackboard or copy it down, except perhaps very slowly. All that will happen is that the child will fail and come to think of himself or herself as stupid and worthless. Often the consequence of this is depression on the one hand or deep anger on the other, sometimes coupled with a predisposition to delinquent behaviour.

In any case, the child's potential is not developed. As mentioned, the task is to get proper diagnosis or assessment of the child's needs and a well-considered program to help the child compensate for the learning deficit. The assessment area is a serious weakness in the school system. Learning disability is notoriously difficult to identify with accuracy. I do wish at this moment that I had our vice-president, Dr. Yvon Gauthier, with me at the present time for he is one of the noted educational psychologists of this region and could assist me particularly in answering questions in this particular area of assessment, which you might be inclined to ask afterwards. Regrettably, Dr. Gauthier could not be with us this morning.

This assessment task has been left largely in the hands of teachers modestly trained in their acquired skills. As a result, many mistakes have been made. These are obviously tragic for both children and parents. It is no insult to teachers to say that they should not be expected to serve as qualified educational psychologists. Nevertheless, in many jurisdictions they do serve in that way; a tribute, our association thinks generally, to the lack of comprehension on the part of

boards and a common commitment to dealing with exceptionalities on the cheap.

Of course, these things come back later on to haunt us; currently this is happening with the rates of illiteracy which have become so noteworthy, for if we fail to identify properly, then we uncover fewer of the problems that need skilled attention and expensive resources. If a child is not identified early and accurately, we lose many opportunities for most effective helping. Youngsters tend to vegetate. As time passes, it becomes easier and cheaper to classify him or her into a basic stream where costs are low and the child or youth will soon drop out anyhow. I refer you to the Radwanski report, page 153, for some of the injustices in that relationship that he identifies quite well.

We overstate, perhaps, to make the point. But in the interest of fairness, it should also be noted that locally the Sudbury Board of Education has, in the past year, markedly improved its psychological services both in numbers and in expertise. Our association welcomes this strengthening of services in the assessment area. These thorough and competent psychological evaluations will point to the optimum learning conditions for LD kids. Attaining this, as mentioned earlier, was the second part of the overall task. Ideally, every community or jurisdiction would have a full array of resources from which to choose in tailoring educational programs for LD students.

A sample of such an array might be the Reynolds's Cascade Model which, as you can see from the following diagram, ranges from regular classroom attendance with no significant modification for the least severely affected all the way up to the special demonstration provincial schools such as Trillium or Sagonaska.

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You can see that the diagram indicates the severity on the right hand—the severity increases as you move up the model—and the lower levels are for relatively low severity of the condition. Associated with that is the fact that as the severity increases, there is inevitably more "restrictive attention" required.

Indeed, we might follow a suggestion from the Radwanski report by adding into this model the provision of "mentors" and of much increased supplemental help by computers. Radwanski, as you all are aware, talks about both of these areas with considerable optimism. Our association agrees that there is a considerable prospect of improved services in both of these areas.

The mentor idea seems particularly good. Although computers are starting to appear in

reasonable numbers, it is remarkable that for 40 years we have had this potential sort of sitting on our doorstep, and it is still relatively underdeveloped.

These, like the provision of teachers' aides, could help widen educational choices at the lower levels of the model. In any case, if an array of services is available, an individualized plan can be attempted. If it is shrewd and appropriate, the learning-disabled child or youth is likely to thrive. In the absence of such a plan and such an investment of resources, there is likely, as we have said, to be waste, pain, dropout and general disaster all round.

From the local point of view, many of these services are in short or negligible supply. A few of them, such as the Trillium School in Milton, are so far away that it represents a great strain on families to see their children go there, especially at the younger ages. There is a sufficient learning-disabled population in this region that the ministry should serve the north and near north with such a school in Sudbury, North Bay or Sault Ste. Marie.

One can perhaps infer from the foregoing what our association's attitude to general streaming into the basic, general or advanced programs will be. We do not oppose the idea in principle, provided there are enough resources in each stream to make it work. We oppose only the minimal resources attached to the basic and general levels.

Frequently, to put it in a nutshell, they are exercises in neglect, in the experience of our membership. Radwanski wants everyone to feel challenged in order to produce best efforts. But with the levels of resources which he acknowledges commonly exist, we can have plenty of challenge merely to survive.

It appears to us to be a rather wild jump to Radwanski's recommendation 27, which sees a single "high-quality" stream for all students. Learning-disabled youth, for example, if they are making suitable progress, will be learning ways of compensating for their lifelong condition. They will be working hard without necessarily scoring high in the "output" criteria so honoured by Radwanski. In other words, their progress may not be as smooth or as uncomplicated as to fit a preordained pattern of accomplishment, as envisaged in that report.

Let us phrase this reservation somewhat differently. Quite possibly, the ideas of Radwanski on general criteria in the areas of curriculum and examination are good ones. The special education advisory committee of the Sudbury

Board of Education disputed a number of ideas about curriculum, but the principle of a fundamental core curriculum was seen as valid for the bulk of children and youth.

However, it was not seen as very useful for a number of categories of exceptional children. Clearly, content would have to vary for children with intellectual exceptionalities. For learning-disabled children, where the exceptionality is not intellectual but communicational and processual, the curriculum could approximate the majority curriculum, but the teaching methods and examination requirements would have to be appropriate to their needs—the needs of the learning-disabled students.

Generally, in our experience, elementary system programming for LD children is far more individualized than programming in the secondary system. Often, services are only nominally available and access depends on geographical and jurisdictional area. In the absence or near absence of many useful services, it is hardly surprising that some LD youth lose their exceptional designation. As our provincial association brief put it:

"Quite frequently at the intermediate level (i.e., grades 7, 8 or 9) IPRC, someone will suggest to the parent that perhaps their child should give up the 'exceptional' designation. This, unfortunately, does not usually reflect the success of the elementary programming so that the child no longer requires any support for the particular exceptionality, but rather the fact that the secondary system is a great deal less willing and/or able to provide appropriately for exceptional students. Many parents, faced with such subtle or often even overt pressure, succumb and agree to 'demit' their children from the special education system."

If that happens, the youth is likely to be streamed into the basic-level program, encountering little but further failure and continuous psychic damage until he or she, perhaps wisely, escapes by the dropout route.

The position of the Radwanski report seems to be that, having established universal high-quality standards, the students will repeat until they conform. There are proposals for summer school remediation, which we see as reasonable. But there is very little about the quality of the remedial help nor, even more important, whether it is to be tailored to the learning needs of the student. Without these supports, progress for LD children and youth would turn into just another episode in the litany of failure so damaging to self-esteem. The learning goals would have to a

part of the coherent, psychologically sound planning to which we referred earlier. Otherwise, remediation or extra courses are not likely to help with the grade progress and promotion of LD students.

In respect of the semestering system and OSIS, our provincial association observations have been presented to the committee. They struck us as eminently sensible and we totally agree with them. There is no sense in repeating them here. You have them on record and we have nothing further to add in those areas. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. We particularly appreciate the fact you have left time for questions at the end. We have approximately 10 minutes and we have four members who have actually indicated they have a question. I would ask that questions be as brief as possible in order to allow Dr. Calmain time to explore the answers.

Mr. Campbell: Could you expand on the role of the private school situation in Sudbury and its relationship to either board, the public board or the Roman Catholic board?

Dr. Calmain: I will try to elaborate on that for you. There are at present, as I mentioned earlier, approximately 50 children who were admitted to private school in Sudbury. They pay very substantially for that luxury. Most of the parents do not see it as a luxury but as a necessity, because the school system is simply not delivering the required programs to help their kids make any kind of motion. I referred in the brief to vegetation. Frequently that, unfortunately, is what happens.

The private school has the personnel and the dedication to attempt to do a good deal more than that and the results seem to be quite effective.

Mr. Campbell: I have two short supplementaries. Are these students who have attempted to be admitted to Milton or another facility and have been on waiting lists, or is it because it is geographically further away from Sudbury than the parents like to have them?

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Dr. Calmain: Needless to say, parents like to have their kids as close as they can have them. If they can find a private school in town or somewhere close, that would be a major kind of preference for them. Nevertheless, there are people in Sudbury who have had their children in private schools even in the United States, let alone places like Barrie and fairly distant spots. When you look at the demonstration schools, it is a struggle with the school boards, perhaps

everywhere, certainly here, to have school boards admit to the paucity of their own resources. They must somehow concede that they do not have the guns to do the job. This sticks in the craw, evidently, of most school boards, which feel themselves to be the general locus of all kinds of expertise and resources.

It is only after a struggle by the most dedicated parents that a placement, say, in Milton at Trillium School or at Sagonaska School comes about. I think that covers your question.

Mr. Campbell: Yes, it does. Thank you.

Mr. Mahoney: Thanks for the presentation. On page 2, your comment about the task, I would just like you to clarify that. You say the task is to obtain a proper assessment with an eye to removing the child from the mainstream or modifying it to improve educational opportunities. I would have thought that the task of an LD association would be to properly identify a learning disability but to go away from segregation and encourage integration with perhaps some withdrawal.

Having a young son identified LD, I have been through both processes, and the segregation bothers me greatly, with six or seven kids literally in a closet being taken by bus out of their own home community. I much prefer the integration system, with whatever necessary remedial work has to take place in a withdrawal system.

Dr. Calmain: While recognizing the pain involved for parents and the needs of parents as well, I think the association's position comes down rather heavily on the diagnostic needs of the kid. If the kid can do better and is likely to thrive or at least improve in a segregated circumstance, probably the kid's needs have to come first, just the same as if the kid has to leave the home altogether and be 1,000 miles away or something. Those have to be the crunch kinds of decisions.

Fundamentally, the reason we included the Reynolds model is that it does start with the least intrusive methods and moves to the most intrusive methods. Nobody likes the most intrusive methods. There are those lower levels. If they can work, my God, they must be tried. But if they cannot or if there is just no expectation that they are liable to be productive, you are just kidding yourself, with all the fervour that parents have, to hope that somehow it will be enough for the kid to make progress.

Mr. Mahoney: Have you analysed—I am sure you have; maybe you can just comment on your findings—the social implications, from a more

holistic point of view, of segregation, taking them out of a particular peer group, the finger-pointing and all of that type of stuff, "Those guys are the dummies," that kind of mentality that tends to exist when you have such blatant segregation?

I am not talking about a case where segregation obviously may need to take place if there is a real severe problem, but your statement tends to say that the task is with an eye to removing. I would have thought that it would have been with an eye to integrating with special assistance, with the possibility of having to remove the child.

Dr. Calmain: Perhaps your phrasing would be most effective and we will adjust the brief to include that as a preliminary step. I think that is not a bad statement. I accept your point. By including the Reynolds model, we hope to imply that there are levels at which intrusiveness may be very minor. If that is the case, more power to everybody and good luck to all.

On the other hand, if the identification is such that more is required, then we cannot balk at that, however much we dislike it.

Mr. Mahoney: Sure.

Dr. Calmain: However much it may create additional problems, such as the finger-pointing you referred to or the psychic identification of being somewhat peculiar, odd or whatever, those things will inevitably appear over time anyhow and they will probably be more severe the less help the kid has in developing his own skills and potentials. If those are allowed to vegetate or to go down the tube through lack of exercise or development, that itself at later dates will call for all kinds of finger-pointing or the symbolic equivalent of it.

Mr. Mahoney: I have just one final quick question. Could you give me some statistics? You say there is a sufficient learning disabled population to justify a school in northern Ontario, but do you know the figures of what that population is and in what region you are going?

Dr. Calmain: I am not too sure of the geographical boundaries of the public school system in Sudbury, but whatever those geographical boundaries are.

Mr. Campbell: The region of Sudbury.

Dr. Calmain: Okay, wherever that boundary is. There were 270 kids identified in the last year. I have spoken quite recently to Paula Barber, who is the superintendent of education, and she has indicated that before the year is out, she expects that to rise to 300. Obviously, if you do not have the tools of identification, if you do not

have the psychological services on tap, you are not going to identify very much.

You can have an illusory notion that you have no problem, but you simply have not looked in the right direction. If you do the proper workup on kids who are failing, and rather than simply discard them, you do your psychological workup with some skill, then you will locate kids you did not know existed or did not know were not just stupid kids. You also find those numerous times, as I have found them, in the secondary school system, plodding away in the basic stream, kids with all kinds of potential, far more than is being developed.

How many of those there are I am afraid I cannot give you, but I can give you the rough total. The 270 figure is the last one I saw, but there is the expectation of 300 in the region. That is in the public school system. In addition, there is an unknown figure for the separate school system. I have not been in touch with them recently. But one of the key variables is what you are doing to identify kids.

Mr. Jackson: I have just a brief statement and that is on Mr. Mahoney's point about the location and the breadth of the services. I want to put back in perspective that you are an association that deals with adults. Within Sudbury you have some institutions for incarceration for very young adults who are there from a much broader field than just the Sudbury district, and there is the general assembling of the expertise, as well as a teaching university. All of those factors would indicate that this is an ideal community for a centre for those purposes.

If you had the opportunity, as I have had, to tour those facilities in the area, to see the need and some of the pioneer work that is going on in our public schools with those wards—Mr. Keyes is a former minister in that area. He is most familiar with the challenge that is presented.

Just for purposes of the record, I wanted to get the context of it as a community-based resource and not a highly focused response to elementary LD needs. There are some exciting opportunities, if we can get the government to consider more seriously the proposal that you have presented.

Dr. Calmain: Thank you very much for that kind of support.

Mr. Jackson: That was my question.

Dr. Calmain: I welcome that question.

Mr. Mahoney: Do you not agree?

Madam Chairman: I am not quite sure that was a question, but I think we will call it a supplementary comment.

Mr. Jackson: My question is, do you not agree?

Dr. Calmain: I certainly do.

Madam Chairman: What a surprising answer.

We have technically run out of time. As a courtesy to our presenters, I would ask that the members keep their questions brief, as have the two members who have gone before.

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Mr. Reyecraft: Dr. Calmain, I thank you for the brief and appreciate particularly your attempt to clarify the difference between mainstreaming in elementary schools and destreaming in secondary schools. They are two very different issues but two issues which seem to have been confused. The distinction seems to have been blurred as a result of the debate which has been stimulated by Mr. Radwanski's report.

I want to ask you a couple of questions about this business of students in the basic level who have the ability perhaps to take courses at a more difficult level. It is true, I suspect, in this area, as it is in most parts of the province, that basic-level classes tend generally to be smaller than general-level or advanced-level classes?

Dr. Calmain: I think that is probably generally true. It might vary from location to location. I am not so conversant with the system that I would like to make a positive answer. I think I agree with that.

Mr. Reyecraft: If that is the case, is it not true then that a learning-disabled student would be better served in that kind of class because of the smaller numbers and, therefore, the ability of the teacher to deal in a more direct way with individual differences than the student would be in a general-level or advanced-level class?

Dr. Calmain: It makes a lot of sense to me, and that ties in directly with the comments of the brief. There does not seem to me to be any really cheap or easy route to dealing with kids with learning disabilities. To get what they have out of them requires a fairly considerable investment in them, and that means a good deal of attention. For example, take that classification of LD kids, the ADD group, the attentional deficit dysfunc group. That group drives teachers to distraction, and you can well imagine it. They present major problems. There is perhaps an extreme case. In a large grouping, virtually nothing would be done. The potential would be totally lost if they were composed entirely of ADD kids.

Where lesser degrees of severity or the more usual types of LDs are involved, say, dyslexic

kids or something, you still have attention problems because of their struggles and their proneness to give up without the regular support of their teachers. That is why we thought the idea of mentors, teachers' aides and all kinds of supplementary things, even the nonhuman ones like computers, would be very valuable to kids with this type of need.

The ratio of teachers to students in the basic level would potentially present an opportunity to do something with LD kids, I would agree, but they would have to be really well-qualified teachers and, as you know, in the pecking order of the school system, looking after students in the basic is not the plum job by any means. It is quite the reverse. Forgive me if I overstate, but it is not a highly esteemed job and, as a consequence, your chances of doing much with kids of this sort, whose needs are severe and particularly demanding, are pretty minimal. I am not sure if I fully addressed your question.

Mr. Reyecraft: Would you not agree that perhaps the needs of those students would be better served if more attention were paid to the qualification and training of teachers of basic-level courses where, as I said before, because classes are smaller, it is easier for teachers to program individually and also where generally we have students who have found difficulty in learning, whether they are learning-disabled or not?

Dr. Calmain: Sure. I think I would have to agree with you as a general statement. When I think of the successful LD schools, and I think, for example, of the government demonstration schools; Trillium seems to me to be a pretty successful school and so does Collège Canada for the bright and gifted, who also combine that giftedness with LD—they have small ratios. They seek the smallest ratio so that their teachers can actually do something with the kids.

It is a big jump from there to say that wherever you have a small ratio you are going to do something with the kids. It is a big jump, and I do not think it follows, but if you could also ensure quality in basic streaming, you might have the potential to imitate Trillium or Collège Canada or whatever is required by the LD students.

Mr. Keyes: You did say just in reference to Mr. Reyecraft that sometimes you overstate an issue, and I wonder if you would like to elaborate slightly on that, in reference not to the written remark on page 5 but the spoken one—but as we are here on Hansard, it is now recorded—that the provision of resources in the basic and general

levels could be considered nothing other than an exercise in neglect.

The Sudbury Board of Education is coming up next, and I will be asking that question of them. I am sure they would like to know. I am wondering whether your suggestion of the exercise in neglect, from a resource standpoint, relates to the testing of LD students within the school system or in the provision of teaching resources for those students or whether it is more generalized. Perhaps I will also be asking the board to give its evaluation of that statement.

Dr. Calmain: It is a harsh statement—I must concede that first off—and it is a secondhand statement. It comes to me from our membership and it comes to me from literature, sometimes perhaps in fancier words, avoiding such a term as “institutionalized neglect,” and perhaps avoiding the bad vibes accompanying that term, but I think it amounts frequently to the same thing. It does not always.

Obviously one of the problems we have is that when we talk about these things, we try to generalize for the purposes of speech, but we have to acknowledge that there are schools which are trying and achieving much better than others. There are jurisdictions that do different things, and there is high variability within the whole system.

Mr. Keyes: Could I just zero in quickly and finally, though? in regard to the minimal resources in those areas, where do you feel the greatest lack occurs?

Dr. Calmain: Probably the farther out from the urban centres you go, the less. As a generality, I think that is probably so.

Mr. Keyes: I will accept your other statement of it being extensive, because I thought it was a good one. We will ask it of the board when it comes on.

Madam Chairman: Just on a personal note, I would like to thank you for your very balanced comments on the integrated versus segregated issue. We have had that come up a number of times, and it is quite a contentious one. I quite heartily agree with you. You have ultimately to look at what is in the best interest of the child when you are making that decision. Thank you very for coming before us today.

Dr. Calmain: I appreciate the opportunity, Madam Chairman. I thank you and all the members of the committee.

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Madam Chairman: Our next presenter will be the Sudbury Board of Education. Good

morning. We apologize for our late start with your presentation. The two presentations we have had to date have been very stimulating, so that always ends up in a number of questions being asked by members.

Mr. Checkeris: This will not be, Madam Chairman. We will try not to give you indigestion for lunch.

Madam Chairman: I must warn you, Mr. Checkeris, that your reputation has preceded you. The members on the committee who have been to Sudbury on numerous occasion have given us a rundown of what to expect, and we are thoroughly looking forward to it.

Mr. Mahoney: Is this the guy you were talking about?

Madam Chairman: This is the one.

Mr. Jackson: Madam Chairman, he has already had three press conferences and he has not even opened his mouth yet.

Mr. Checkeris: That is right.

Mr. Jackson: We all would like to know your secret.

Mr. Checkeris: Thank you for the opportunity.

Madam Chairman: For the record, perhaps you could identify yourself for electronic Hansard. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation, but the way everything else has gone this morning, that is meaningless. We are very much looking forward to your comments.

SUDBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Checkeris: Let me just put it this way. I am a child of Greek immigrants, born in Cabbagetown, Toronto. I was educated at Central Technical School, spent some time in the navy and became a businessman. I am retired. I am a 40-year veteran of the school board trusteeship. I have seen the school system when it was poor, with no teachers and lots of kids. Sometimes I think we are going in that direction again right now.

At any rate, I am here as chairman of the English-Language Education Council of the Sudbury Board of Education. I have with me Jim Smith, who is the director of education, and Gord Ewin, who is the secretary of our council and superintendent of our schools.

You have a copy of our brief and you will forgive me if I deviate from the brief a little bit from time to time.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is part of the reputation, Ernie.

Mr. Checkeris: I always say that you have got to get seated and in front of them; then it is all yours. You would not dare kick me out—or would you?

Madam Chairman: I am tougher than I look.

Mr. Mahoney: She is pretty tough.

Mr. Checkeris: Great. That is good, I like that. Feel free. I do not bear any malice to anybody. If I am wrong, you tell me.

Madam Chairman: We have got the bouncer at the back. The clerk is waiting there for the opportunity.

Mr. Checkeris: Just simply ask Mr. Jackson to ask me to leave, and I will do whatever he says.

Mr. Jackson: Always willing.

Mr. Checkeris: Great.

Interjections.

Mr. Checkeris: In reality, the purpose of our brief is to answer some of the questions that were in the advertisement, as we have seen it, and perhaps elaborate a little bit on some of the problems that we see. It is almost impossible to discuss the business of grade promotion, semestering, streaming and OSIS, each of them in isolation. They are all tied together quite tightly.

For us, the distance between schools, size of schools and the expense of providing education to the sparsely populated areas must be seriously considered. We have schools that are remote, where we are required to provide two to three extra teachers in order to give those kids a fair program. Over the years, I have asked the government, the ministry and the Treasurer to consider program funding for those types of schools, not only for us but also for northern Ontario and all schools boards, including Roman Catholic separate school boards.

I think it is important that you realize that the young people in northern Ontario require a competitive education because they do end up in southern Ontario. It is unfair to have a child bused 60 or 70 kilometres at the junior level and even then provide him with a classroom with three grades in it and not able to give him a full program.

What our board has done is, we are buying that extra expense; our local ratepayers are prepared to pay for it but they are not happy. We suggest to you that the government should provide program funding—as I call it—to provide a full program at no extra cost to the board. We know what obligations we have to meet; it is the costs over and above that that we are concerned about.

As I say here, our board is very large. We go from 95 kilometres to 140 kilometres wide. If you want to use Metropolitan Toronto as an example, we cover an area as far north as Barrie, across to Oshawa and over to Hamilton.

To stream or not to stream is a complex issue and requires a precise definition of the word "streaming." I think you probably have heard that quite often. The easiest place to eliminate streaming is at the junior kindergarten and kindergarten level of our present school systems. The task could be made easier by developing programs which teach parents skills for dealing with preschool children in terms of physical, mental, emotional and social development.

As I have often said, probably the only stable program or platform that there is in the province today for kids is the school systems. They do provide a lot of things. I do not know whether or not you appreciate it, but the boards are asked to provide not just education for kids but also to provide mothers and fathers, and they provide some people who do work very, very hard in our school system to look after the social problems that the kids have got. Identification of children with all kinds of problems is happening in our classrooms daily. We do not believe that we are getting our fair share of the funds required to do just that, if you want to be in a fair society.

As they move into the primary and junior divisions, the grouping of children begins. Some students take longer to develop skills, and I think we all must recognize that. I know I can use myself as example. There were years when I do not believe I knew what the heck was going on in school because I was developing physically and mentally, and that happens with kids at different levels. You cannot put all the 12-year-olds in one room and expect them all to do the same thing at the same time because it just does not happen.

Kids have to be identified for special education programs, and that has to be done carefully. When it is done, we have to provide that at a fair cost. We provide speech assistance now and we have done a good job over the years, but it is an additional cost over and above straight education.

If, as an educational system, we are to eliminate grouping, the forerunner of streaming, we are going to have to provide the following: parental education so that parents have the necessary parenting skills; remedial teachers/special education teachers to team teach in the classroom and/or reduced class size, and learning materials which provide pupils with a vast array of remedial programs. I use here, as an example,

what the computer can really do for kids without having a teacher around.

While I am at that, I will pass around this little clipping. I think it is rather important. The ministry, the educational people or the Treasurer (Mr. R. F. Nixon) has seen fit to cut the budget of our educational program by \$120,000-odd and left us hanging out there with 15 schools with incomplete systems that we will not be able to use.

That is a situation that I think is purely disgusting—to promise us and say to us, “Here is what we are going to give you for computers”; we order them, and then the funding is cut off. That is bad business, as far as I am concerned. It just should not have happened at all. If the province gets away with it or does it again, it spells disaster for not only school boards but also for other social agencies.

That is not the way to run a business. It sure as hell is not a good way, to create expectations for people and then cut them off. We have teachers now who have these things sitting in the classrooms covered over with a dust cover. They will not be able to use them until perhaps 1989. The alternative for our board was to take them and go into a deficit budget—an underlevy, if you like—of \$120,000 or begin our budget year in 1989 with \$120,000 built into the budget. I am sorry; if there were a bunch of truck drivers in front of me, you would hear a different language.

Madam Chairman: I note that you have passed the newspaper clipping over. We will ask the clerk to make copies of that and distribute it to all the members.

Mr. Checkeris: That is fine. It is just an example, and I know there are boards all across the province that are suffering the same situation. It is most unfair, especially when we have difficulty at the beginning of the year creating our budget and waiting to see what the government is going to give us for a grant. We drag that out as long as we can. It is difficult enough creating that budget without having this happen as well.

Nonstreaming in the intermediate division of elementary and secondary schools can only be eliminated if the above program is successful. Therefore, nonstreaming at these levels, while an excellent objective, may be impractical, as streaming at a secondary school is required to challenge top students, relieve weak students of frustration and prevent dropouts.

You have to have special programs. You have to have streaming or whatever you call it. We prefer to call it grouping because that is what happens in the classroom. At the elementary

level, we know that each classroom has two to three levels in reading, mathematics, science or whatever, because that is the way kids are and that is the way society is.

An alternative to the present system of streaming into the basic, general and advanced levels would be to offer courses at grades 9 and 10 based on career-oriented objectives. Students would be free to select courses or credits which they felt would meet their future aspirations. Tutors and guidance staff would be required to assist students in meeting their objectives.

What we are saying here is that more money has to be poured today into the counselling and guidance services in our schools to assist students to do what they want to do. Most young people, I suggest to you, do not know or have a very vague idea of what they want to do. Our role should be to assist them to achieve those ends if they can. They cannot do it by having a concrete-type, rigid system of streaming.

In conclusion, streaming is a practical way to meet the needs of individual students. The removal of streaming/grouping will be an expensive move and one which the local boards will not be able to finance. It becomes very costly; you will have a lot more dropouts.

Turning to grade promotions and having been on the Hall-Dennis report commission, I recall talking about the credit system, which is very important. It allows students to move along at their own rate and pick up as many credits as they require. But we found that we could not remove the so-called benchmarks of grades. Grades 9 to 13 still exists in the minds of a lot of people and the numbers are an identification of where you are in the system.

If you tell a parent you have 25 credits or you have 18 credits, it does not mean anything. They have to know either what year you are in or what system you are in. Under the credit system, we have not been able to eliminate it. We require a benchmark like that. They are promoted as we say they are, yet many students in our system today, particularly in our semestered schools, have credits all over the clock and they may have an 11.5 grade or whatever you want to call it.

The opposite of grade promotion is continuous progress and therefore individualized instruction. In order to have individualized instruction, the system would require a sequential list of skills and knowledge, all pupils working on an individual program. I understand there is a program like that at Cochrane Iroquois Falls at present. I think it is subsidized to the tune of about \$200,000 a year by the ministry as a pilot

project, because they have students coming in from quite a large area in the Cochrane Iroquois Falls board. I am curious to see how that works out when the report comes out, but it does cost money.

There needs to be a greatly reduced pupil-teacher ratio, naturally, and testing at various stages of the program. The above program would be costly and would not address the fact that the mastery of subject materials is an oversimplification of the learning process. There will be children who will never master all of the prescribed skills and knowledge. What do we do with them? Summer school is not the answer as all children require a holiday; even we do.

At the secondary school level, grade promotions have already disappeared with the credit system and therefore it is not much of an issue I do not think.

In the matter of semestering, we ask a bunch of questions. Should there be flexible credit hours? For example, should some subjects require 60 hours instead of 110 hours? Can some students master all that subject matter in 60 hours rather than 110? Why not take the student off as soon as he has mastered it and let him move on at his own speed? Some students can do that. Should the length of the period vary according to the subject area? Some subject do require in-depth study. Are there some subjects which should be taught on a conventional yearly basis?

I recall discussions we have had in the past, as I think Gord has indicated to me, about the fact that a student can take mathematics in his first semester of one year and then not touch mathematics again until four semesters later. With all that in between with no maths, it requires a tremendous amount of review work to catch up and perhaps the student gets a lower mark as a result. French or language instruction, music and I believe some of the sciences also require that sort of thing. So should we be allowed to make some changes as well?

In regard to OSIS, since 1984 we have had an avalanche of guidelines, and Gord brought a bunch of them along. What is that, Gord?

Mr. Ewin: This is just business studies. I brought science along too—I think there were 15 guidelines alone. There is the business studies.

Mr. Checkeris: They indicate 15 guidelines for science alone. It may seem like a good idea and it is, I suppose, because our society does change. I think, talking about the matter of science, we do not teach science alone any more in the old sense. We teach about the environment

and the social impact of the environment. All of this is part of science and it is very complex.

Our only complaint is when we get these guidelines, we require teams of teachers to rewrite them and put them into the context of our local board. This is happening all across the province. We require two, three or four people to come out, either do it as a writing team from the summer or second them through the school year and rewrite our whole program.

Now, our concern is not that so much. Our concern is that, once that is done, the educational system might suddenly decide to do something else and we will get another 15 guidelines for science or whatever it may be and have to go through the process all over again. We are not entirely sure what we should do about it. I know there have been demands in the past to have the Ministry of Education beefed up at Toronto, more people put into Toronto. Then they would do the rewriting, if you like, and we would receive programs in a package form that we can use in the classroom almost immediately.

I think Jim might like to comment on that. Jim, do you have any comment?

Mr. Smith: I believe we should be working towards simplifying curriculum. I believe the way the ministry is going is in the right direction where they are getting people from around the province to come together to develop ready-to-use curriculum, because it is a long way from developing curriculum to having it implemented in the classroom. It takes us a lot of time, energy and money to write those courses of study based on the guideline so that they can be used in the classroom, then updating the teacher to use the guideline and then the methodology in order to get it in the classroom. There are prototypes in the province. I would quote the geography one as an example of where committees have provided ready-to-use guidelines that require very minimal treatment by the board before they can be implemented. I would encourage that practice as much as possible.

Mr. Checkeris: In conclusion, the issues and problems inherent in grade promotion, semestering, streaming and implementation of OSIS are complex and solutions will prove to be costly, no matter how you look at it. School boards will not be able to pass on these costs to already-overburdened local taxpayers. In addition, parental expectations have been fuelled by ministry announcements and legislation such as Bill 82. I think the previous speaker really did say just that.

You expect an awful lot from your school system. If I may, many years ago we discussed

just that same problem and, as I have said many times before, the problem with the school system and its relation to a government that is elected every five years is a difficult one, because what you spend today on schools, at the elementary level particularly, will come back to haunt you or to bless you 20 years later. Five years is an awfully short time for things that happen in our school system.

What I am saying is that money spent on education today, rather than on correctional services or social services, will help eliminate money spent in penal institutions and the social services 20 years later. I suppose it would take rather brave provincial politicians to make a decision to spend a lot of money on education today and not get a reward until 20 years later. That is a difficult problem that you are going to have to face. I have said it so often that it is coming echoing back down the valley towards me again, but that is the situation.

You create expectations and then do not provide us with the funds and staff. Parent power is now at an all-time high. People are not shy any more. They phone their trustees and they phone their MPPs, no doubt, and groups do get together and they know that pressure does change things. Provincial assistance is required and we hope these hearings conducted by the select committee on education will begin a process which will lead to solutions and, hence, benefit students in the province. That is really the only reason I am a school trustee. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Checkeris. I was quite interested in your comment that you have to provide competitive education for your northern students because, quite frankly, many of them eventually leave the north and go down to the south where they have to compete. I am a product of northern Ontario education, since I went to elementary school in Matheson and secondary school in Iroquois Falls, which you mentioned had the high school pilot project that is going on right now. I do not know if that is very good or very bad. I know that we were alleged to have one of the best educations in Ontario at Iroquois Falls High School many eons ago when I was going there. Unfortunately, I was one of the exceptions.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It's a hung jury.

Madam Chairman: Would Mr. Johnston stop saying it is a hung jury. One thing that was quite different from the schools in the south was that we had far fewer options. My language options were French, English and Latin and that was it. We know many of our southern counter-

parts did have such options as Spanish, Russian, Italian and so on. Is this still the case? Do northern Ontario schools have a plethora of options?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Nobody has Latin any more.

Madam Chairman: That is Latin. What is that?

Mr. Checkeris: I have been a member of the Northern Ontario School Trustees' Association I guess since they started, since they left the old urban and rural thing. Our main purpose for existing was to hammer the provincial government to get more money for northern Ontario because of distances, heat, light and power, the cost of construction and providing programs we felt were important. Our main thrust has been to provide a better-than-average education for kids because we know that the well-educated child is not going to hang around the north. We hope that changes. We are working hard to change it, but let's face reality. That is the way it is.

Because of the sort of pioneer spirit, I suppose, we do provide a lot of options. Our ratepayers do provide the money to do it too. You know that. We are not shy to ask our ratepayers and our ratepayers are not happy. They do get a delivery of good kids because I know we have a tremendous record of young people who have left the Sudbury area in particular and been extremely successful in southern Ontario and are successful locally as well.

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In order to do that, it requires, for example, the central city, if you like, in Sudbury to be taxed accordingly to make sure that that particular remote area in our school system receives the best education we can provide with the money we have available. It means that other areas suffer as a result, but priorities say that that has to be.

We accept that as school trustees. We do not like it. We believe that government should, if it is going to provide an equal opportunity, equalize it in the same way. I suppose that even bears on the fact that our local ratepayer, on a percentage basis on his home rate, pays a lot more money than the local ratepayer in southern Ontario where the industrial complexes are.

We buy that material, using tin cans—canned soup. Campbell Soup Co. Ltd. is in southern Ontario. We buy Campbell Soup in northern Ontario. They take advantage of the assessment down there. We do not. So that is all we are asking for.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Could we just get the figures on the expenditure per student here locally?

Mr. Checkeris: I do not know whether Mr. Smith would have it off the top of his head.

Mr. Smith: It is roughly \$4,500 per secondary student and \$3,500 per elementary student—significantly above the provincial average.

Mr. Keyes: I was just wondering why it was not split taxwise.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Keyes, could you just turn on your microphone? Thank you.

Mr. Keyes: The per pupil is a good one, but you talk about bearing a more excessive part of the tax burden. Can you just tell us quickly in this municipality what it is relative to total expenditures? How much comes from the general tax base versus government?

Mr. Smith: Right now, it is approximately 50-50. It used to be 70-30; it is now about 50-50.

Mr. Keyes: That is a bit better than southern Ontario, particularly in the city of Kingston area. Interjection.

Madam Chairman: Sorry, I did not mean to lead the committee off topic on that one, but as a Metro member—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Oh yes, you did.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: The jury was hung.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They are sharp. They are probably coming to a decision.

Madam Chairman: I think I had better try to control this committee a little better. We have Mr. Johnston, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Keyes to start.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have a comment or two and then a couple questions. I just wanted to thank you very much for doing what you have done about elaborating on the need to really focus in on the early levels of education.

We want to deal with the whole streaming issue. That has not been done much. We really need to start looking at that a lot more in this committee because there are a lot of questions begged about secondary school streaming to do with how we deal with things in the primary level.

The other thing I would want to say is that we are all having difficulties with definitions. I want to say that in my definition of streaming, I do make a distinction between ability grouping and streaming that you do not seem to make, that is, I see a difference between the notion of heterogeneous classes and homogeneous classes developed often on very arbitrary kinds of bases.

We learned in Ottawa, for instance—I was shocked to learn—that at the basic-level high schools, such as Sir Guy Carleton, one of the major determinants of getting in was that you had to have an IQ of 85 or lower. For those people who do not think there is a connection between streaming and integration, I would just raise that as a major philosophical concern.

I think we have to take another element of notions of keeping people in their peer groups and not setting up basic-level schools and that sort of thing as we look at the issue of what are the definitions of streaming.

You made one comment in the paper which surprised me, which made it sound as though streaming was having a positive influence on school dropout numbers. I would like to know what evidence there is that streaming is actually lowering the number of dropouts because that is what your assertion is in the paper. I have never seen a study that indicated it had any effect.

Mr. Checkeris: I will let Mr. Ewin answer the question, but my personal opinion is that we can recognize that potential dropout as early as we can and provide an impact on that kid as early as we can, but it would require that the child be either withdrawn from classes from time to time or streamed or whatever you want to call it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It would require a different definition.

Mr. Checkeris: He would have to have special programs in order to avoid being a dropout later on. I do not know whether you want to call it streaming.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Maybe we are running into a definitional problem again.

Mr. Checkeris: Right.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I see a distinction between putting a person into the basic stream, for instance, of a vocational school and the kind of withdrawal assistance, remedial assistance and specialized help in terms of identifying individual needs. I do not know that there is any evidence that says that because people are streamed in terms of the basic or general secondary levels they have lower dropout rates. In fact, they seem to have the highest levels.

Mr. Ewin: If I could comment on the issues raised, first of all, in the elementary schools we use grouping in primary, junior and intermediate classes. Children are grouped into three groups. I said in the paper that that was a forerunner of streaming because if you were to follow a child in one of those low groups in primary one through to secondary school, you would probably find

that he was a person who was then streamed into the basic level. So at elementary school, we use grouping.

The only time we use streaming in an elementary system is when we stream off for special ed into some of our special classes, special learning-disabled classes, etc. At the secondary level, you have streaming. Those are the definitions that I use, where you stream into the basic, general, advanced and the basic self-contained.

You questioned the statement about streaming or the implication that it would prevent dropouts. While I agree there probably is no study, I went around to our secondary teachers and principals and asked them, "What would be the impact if there was no streaming at the basic, general and advanced levels?" These are people who are involved in secondary education. Their comment was, "If you think there are a lot of dropouts now, do away with the streaming in secondary school and you will find frustrated students who are having trouble keeping up and frustrated students who are above the average of the class."

Mr. D. S. Cooke: What did they think the alternative was?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Have they talked to people on the Waterloo County Roman Catholic Separate School Board or the Wellington County Board of Education where they have been doing this to see if that has occurred?

It seems to me—we all grapple with this issue—that a number of us have been doing things in certain ways now for some time and maybe we are having difficulty looking at other ways because of fear. There have been so many changes inflicted on the system that it has been sort of reeling from them over the last number of years. There is a real fear of even looking at the concepts now because of presumptions like that, which I am not sure we have hard evidence about.

Mr. Ewin: That is right. I would agree. I do not think there is hard evidence; there are feelings. This paper takes a position that if you want to solve the problem, put the emphasis in parental education and preschool and primary education, bring the people along and maybe even look at grades 9 and 10 where you might bring in people. I believe you would still have to have some type of grouping, but you may, as this paper indicates, group by courses that would be career-oriented. A student then would pick courses that would meet his career aspirations and would be open to our present basic, general and advanced levels. Again, if a student in the

basic decided he wanted to take a course on Russian or Canadian history, he might need a backup, tutor or information, but it certainly would allow him to do that. It looks at the whole preschool to secondary school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I very much appreciate the brief. I am just trying to get at a couple of things that are giving me some difficulty at the moment. I asked this of the Ottawa board and it could not give me an answer. Have you recently or ever done a socioeconomic study to see who gets streamed in the basic?

Mr. Smith: No, we have not.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Old data seem to indicate that there are some very specific groupings there.

The last question I want to ask is a very general one. All of a sudden it just hit me today that our presumptions on what education is supposed to do have changed somewhat over the last 30 years—I am talking about primary-secondary now—not just for the sociological reasons you mentioned, Mr. Checkeris, but in terms of the other roles the school plays. In the 1950s, a very small percentage of people went to post-secondary, and that was not seen to be an option. Then we brought in the community colleges and the huge expansion of the university system, and now we have 65 per cent of our graduates who are going straight into the workforce and the others are going on, it would appear.

When we are looking at these issues of streaming and things, I am wondering whether we do not have to look very seriously at what we think the basic education levels are going to be in the next couple of decades, what the requirements to be a full citizen in our country are going to be and whether 65 per cent of our people getting only a high school education are really going to be prepared for the kind of world we are moving into, especially when we have such a devaluing of continuing education and especially in terms of who goes to continuing education. It is not people who are high school grads; it is the university grads and the college grads who do the continuing ed programs.

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I am wondering if you have given any thought to that very notion. When we talk about how we are streaming people and what our expectations of them are, is a high school graduation, 65 per cent of our population getting that basic diploma or certificate, where we should be going in the next decade or should we be setting our sights considerably higher?

Mr. Checkeris: I had one concern when you brought up the community colleges. Community colleges want to become universities. Community colleges, I recall, were to be polytechs, and I hailed that as a great breakthrough. They were to be skill-oriented training centres for people going into the trades, if you like, using that as a very general term.

Every time I read in the paper that General Motors is going to bring in 100 Scots or Brits or Italians or Greeks to be machinists, it makes me madder than hell about that. I want them hiring our young people. I do not begrudge the Scots or whoever coming over here to get the jobs, but what is wrong with us?

I know for one thing we have kids in our system—we call them grade 14 kids—who were not able to get into community college. They come back to high school for another term to upgrade their marks so they can get into community colleges. They want to become skilled people. Really, the trend is what you say. The trend is that high school graduation is not sufficient in industry.

It is not only that. I think that as our society changes, we are going to have more people working fewer hours, so people have to learn what to do when they retire. We may be retiring people earlier and earlier. What do we do with people who do not have any hobbies or aspirations or social responsibilities or what have you? That is another problem you are going to worry about, and it is happening pretty continually right now.

I was at a meeting last night of our supervised alternative learning for excused pupils program. We have a large group of kids who do not care, who say: "What the hell? Society is going to look after me." That is pretty unhappy. I do not know whether education can help them.

Mr. Jackson: At age 13 or 14.

Mr. Checkeris: At 13 and 14 years of age. I say to them: "Look, you've got nothing. You're going to be a sales clerk for a couple of years. When the company gets mad at you or you get laid off, where do you go from there when you apply?" It is the chicken and the egg. It is at the very bottom of our—if you want to call it the bottom; I think it is the top. Our elementary school system has to do a lot more work and more money has to be poured into it, with resources. Then you can forget about the groupings and the streaming; the kids will come out on their own.

Marcus Long told us that a well-educated elementary kid does not require a secondary school. He will learn on his own once you teach

him how to learn, and we are not doing that yet. We are being crowded with a lot of other things.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for your patience, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: I am always patient, but I am about to run short simply because we are running short of time. We are now a half-hour behind. Technically, the time is over, but Mr. Jackson and Mr. Keyes indicated very early on that they have questions; so I think we will proceed as long as members try to keep their preambles to the shorter side.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you for your brief and your explanations, which are always appreciated.

I have some questions about semestering. Very briefly, are you structuring your semestered schools? Are all your schools semestered? Do you have traditional schools? Do you have partial schools, as we have seen in the Ottawa-Carleton area? Let me stop there and just get that on the record.

Mr. Checkeris: All of our schools are semestered. I do not know whether any have any deviation from that.

Mr. Jackson: Second, you talked about this transition period. Virtually all the deputants today have talked about the transition period between elementary and secondary and sort of stabilizing the optional experience and lessening the radical streaming that occurs between grade 8 and grade 9. I wonder if your board has put its mind around looking at a proposal of having a traditional experience for grades 9 and 10 or for the intermediate school experience to lessen the impact of the effects that occur between grade 8 and grade 9. I cross-refer that with your statements about the concern you identified about music, language and math, which has been identified to this committee extensively, and the inappropriate disruption.

Radwanski's model for remediation is to go to summer school. How the hell do you do that when your course finishes in February? Are you supposed to hang around until June in order to get remediated and to be given your last opportunity not to fail?

I am really concerned. I will be focusing a lot on this area between now and the time we write our recommendations. I would like to know if there are some concerns being expressed out there, if your principals and superintendents are coming back to you and saying there are some concerns here with respect to the accelerated

dropout in this period, frustration that is being experienced, deficient language skills.

Mr. Checkeris: I have heard some talk about changing the method of how we deliver education in grades 9 and 10, but only talk. I do not think I have seen anything on paper yet. Have you, Jim?

Mr. Smith: No, we have not really addressed that, but we are in the position where Radwanski does raise the issue. We have red flags in some quarters, but I think it is worthy of discussion and it is something we have to get into. I think we have started to try to break down that barrier between grade 8 and grade 9. We are organized on the basis where the superintendent is responsible for the secondary school and the feeder school. I think that helps get rid of some of the politics of education that have developed over the years, elementary and secondary.

The closer we can bring those two panels together, the better it is for curriculum-building and for the students. I think it is essential that the principal of the elementary school, who plays such a key role, is able to meet with the principal of the secondary school and the guidance department to talk about the kids who are coming along and their problems and try to smooth that transition. I think you are right on when you talk along that line.

Mr. Jackson: I am not worried about the transition as much as I am about the grade 8 guidance teacher telling a student, "You're never going to make it to university and therefore you're going to be going to the basic program." I do not want to dwell on that.

One very quick other question has to do with this notion of streaming and the form it can take in terms of program streaming. I have referred in committee to Sudbury Secondary School, thanks to your inviting me up here to tour the facility. It is an exceptional facility. Do you provide a high percentage of advanced-level programs?

Could you comment for the record and for the committee about how that is working within your jurisdiction, the fact that you are open to other school boards in terms of your catchment, and whether you have any concerns about the specialization of separate secondary schools so that they in fact become a form of streaming if you look at it as program streaming?

Mr. Checkeris: Sudbury Secondary School is our school for performing arts. It is the primary school for that for the whole area. Perhaps Jim Smith can elaborate as to how we are changing. I do not know what the percentage is for advanced-level courses.

Mr. Jackson: Do you have any enrichment-level programming going on? That is what I thought, yet there is not that being made available in the regular schools to the same degree, an enrichment program across the system.

Mr. Smith: Sudbury Secondary School is a typical 1,000-pupil secondary school, other than that it caters to kids at both ends of the spectrum. We have our STAY program, which keeps kids who are not functioning well in the traditional program, and the performing arts program, which Mr. Checkeris mentioned, at the other end. It is sort of a magnet school where kids from all over the area can come for the specific program.

Yes, they do have some enrichment classes, but many of our secondary schools do. There are specifically designated classes in some of the core subject areas. I think Sudbury Secondary School differs just on the bottom end and the top end, if you wish, of the spectrum of student ability.

Mr. Checkeris: It is interesting that in Boca Raton, Florida, there is a large school system that has several campuses, as they call them. They go from junior kindergarten right through to what we would call grade 13, their grade 12. Any time you suggest that in Ontario, red flags fly all over the place saying, "You cannot have high school kids and elementary school kids in the same general area." Yet I think there is one such school working in Peterborough. I do not know how successful it is and I have never got around to visiting it either.

In my visit to Boca Raton, the transition between elementary and secondary does not exist because the students are all part of that school. The teachers intermingle at the staff level and they know the child who is coming into grade 9 intimately, because he has been involved with the school activities all the time. It seems to work. The fear of a lot of older kids and younger kids just does not seem to matter.

They were formed at a very complex time, during the Cuban crisis, where they had many young people coming in who had no English at all. It was very imperative that they teach them English and it grew out of necessity. I think it is a heck of a good idea, and we just do not do it in Ontario.

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Mr. Jackson: I think it should be put on the record that red flags are something that never have scared a Liberal government. If you wish to put your Boca Raton suggestion in the form of a

recommendation to this committee to have a look at, I am sure there are several members of the committee who would agree with you.

Mr. Checkeris: February would be a good time. I am available then.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Perhaps we can all go together.

Mr. Jackson: Ernie will be our tour guide.

Madam Chairman: What really warns us is the blue flags. They get us every time.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you, Mr. Checkeris, for all your input. It is hard to believe that you have retired, but I am sure even if you have, the lumber company will still be under your wise eye, as it has been for so many years.

While it is not in your brief, I wanted to have a chance for you as a board—because I have a great affinity for children with learning disabilities, having worked with them for all my teaching career—perhaps it will be Mr. Smith or Mr. Ewin who will make some emphasis with regard to Dr. Calmain's statement that he felt the whole situation of resources here was probably an exercise in neglect by the board.

I wanted you to try to perhaps balance this a bit on the whole basis of where you see the learning disabled in this community fitting into the school system, because my opinion is that the province provides, with the implementation of Bill 82, reasonable dollars to boards to provide a very good system of resources for the schools, particularly in the primary area. If that is not happening, why not? Where do you place them in this kind of priority?

Mr. Checkeris: They are both jumping in. It is a very important topic.

Mr. Ewin: I will start off by saying that I think the Sudbury Board of Education has a proud history in dealing with special education. I believe we spend—you talk about the money coming from the province, and Jim Smith will probably be more exact on this—all the money coming from the provincial ministry on special education.

We have had special segregated classes, children integrated; we have many educational assistants working with integrated pupils. As was mentioned earlier, we have hired a chief psychologist. We have a psychologist on stream as well. I believe if there were any concern that might be coming to the Sudbury board, it is coming from people saying, "Gee, maybe too much money is being spent of the general funds on special education," that the province probably should be funding more.

Mr. Keyes: So possibly you have implemented a fair amount of the Reynolds' Cascade model that Dr. Calmain referred to as far as special classes, etc., are concerned. You may not have a chance to see it, but I am sure you can get it today.

Mr. Ewin: Yes. Within the system we have special segregated classes for general learning disabled students, specific learning disabled students, trainable retarded students, behavioural students, socially adjusted students. In fact, we go right through the entire realm. We have within our system right now some 43 in resource rooms within our schools to deal with the children who are integrated into the general student population but who require assistance.

Mr. Smith: Just as a general comment, part of our reason for being far above the average per pupil cost is our emphasis in this area. We have been into basic programming, for example, for the last 10 or 12 years, if not more, from grades 9 to 12. That is expensive programming because your pupil-teacher ratio is low and that is your major cost.

Just to give you a bit of background quickly, in 1975 we had 30,000 students; we now have 20,000. We have lost one third of our enrolment over that period of time, and in that time we have built up our special programs. As I say, it reflects in our cost per pupil. I think we are moving now into the realm of psychologists and psychometrists.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Are you only now moving into the realm of psychologists? Have you ever tried to hire—

Mr. Smith: We have had psychometrists and got away from it. Now we are into psychologists and back into psychometrists.

Mr. Jackson: If the government has to subsidize doctors to get them to locate up north, then why do we suspect that we do not have to do the same thing for school services? That is the perspective we should have on record about northern Ontario.

Mr. Checkeris: It took us four years to find a satisfactory education psychologist. There were no applications, period. You know that. We tried to get one who was bilingual to come to northern Ontario: impossible to find. We had no help from the Ministry of Education in that respect. In that kind of position, these people who are coming out well qualified can command a pretty fair salary and command where they can go, and private practice is a hell of a lot more lucrative than working for the educational system.

I think the biggest topic at our board for discussion is the special education component of our board. I asked Mr. Ewin to give us a breakdown of the educational assistants we had 10 years ago: none. Five years ago: none. Now we have over 43 and going on 60. These are people who help this teacher in the classroom with special education kids.

The ministry may be paying a lot of money, but our local ratepayer is also paying a big buck for that. We think they are very important young people.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you very much for the balance.

Mr. Smith: If I could comment, we have just about completed a study of our special education costs. I think your committee would be very interested to know what a board of our size, which I guess is medium size in the province, spends on special education compared to the grants received. I think you will find it very interesting because we are labelled on some occasions as not spending enough on special education. We believe we are spending a great deal more than we are being funded for. It is a significant part of our costs above ceiling, and we would love to share that with you; not share the above-ceiling cost, but the report.

Interjections.

Madam Chairman: We will take a special collection from members, but I would not hold your breath waiting for the results.

Mr. Checkeris: Could we send you a copy of it when we are finished?

Interjection.

Madam Chairman: It is time for me to flick my whip. It has been a long morning but it certainly has been a stimulating one.

Mr. Checkeris: Thank you very much. You have some pretty wild horses to look after. We appreciate the opportunity.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Sudbury Board of Education representatives for sharing your expertise and many of your comments with us today.

I would like to welcome the Timiskaming Board of Education representatives. I start off with an apology. We are now running some 50 minutes late and we know you have travelled a considerable distance to get here, so we appreciate your patience. We hope it is not too inconvenient for your travel schedule.

We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation but, as you have seen from the rest of our presentations this morning, the time limit

is not always adhered to. We hope you will save enough time at the end of your presentation for members' questions. Begin whenever you are ready, and please start by introducing yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

1220

TIMISKAMING BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. McCall: It is my pleasure to introduce Edith Rabillard, who is the vice-chairperson on the board and also chairperson of the education committee. Brenda Wojick is the chairperson of the finance committee and an active member on a number of other committees. I am Bob McCall, the director for the Timiskaming Board of Education.

I would also like to express the regrets of the chairperson of the board, Mr. Leukert, who is unable to be with us today. He is meeting with the minister today.

Mr. Mahoney: I guess we know where we stand.

Mr. McCall: We cannot split ourselves in too many creative ways.

First of all, I think it is important to indicate that the Timiskaming Board of Education does subscribe to the goals of the Ministry of Education but feels that these goals are not being achieved due to a lack of awareness of the implications of each defined goal by all parties and changes needed in teacher training. I think it is very important to have goals that are defined and perhaps even defined more specifically, because if you look very closely and very thoughtfully at the goals of education, they are quite well written but not understood, either in terms of educational funding, program funding delivery or a number of other related areas. We will address those as we go through the process, particularly looking at changes needed in teacher training.

I think it should be crystal clear to the government that the public school system of this province must provide universally accessible educational opportunities to all learners, regardless of their ethnocultural, social or economic status, geographical location, age, individual exceptionality or religious preference. Now there is a mouthful in there that I think you have to think about very carefully in your deliberations.

If a board is to meet the requirements outlined in the goals of education and to meet all of those particular stated needs and provide all the programs mandated by the ministry, then adequate funding must be provided by the province to ensure that all boards can indeed attain these

goals without undue hardship on the local ratepayers.

Very careful delineation needs to be looked at in terms of ensuring that there is an appropriate grant weighting factor, for example, that does address boards such as Timiskaming, with the geographical disparity inherent in there, in order to ensure that our young people do receive a quality education and that regardless of their social or economic status, they have all the opportunities to develop the kinds of skills that will make them productive members of society and develop a measure of self-worth, which believe it or not from some comments this morning, are not geographical in terms of excellence or intelligence. One would be interested in some analytical commentary with respect to the fact that one's intelligence quotient has no correlation to where one lives or where one resides and, intellectually, I resent the inference of that, having lived all across Ontario.

The following is a summation of the Timiskaming Board of Education's position on the issues upon which input was sought by the select committee. We will deal only with those items that were requested and not deal with editorial commentary in other areas.

The goals and philosophies stated in OSIS are very admirable and certainly do appear to address the wants and needs expressed by parents of students in Ontario's educational system. I think it is very important to look at historical data as well. Historically, if one is to look at patterns of growth within the educational system then the dropout rate has reduced significantly from that which was the case in the 1950s and the 1960s.

In other words, I can look back on what I might call the good old days when I was in those illustrious institutions. If I had a very select memory, I would have good memories. If I had a very analytical memory, then I would look at the pros and the cons of what I would call the good old days. The goals and philosophies are there in terms of endeavouring to reduce the dropout rate by providing the kind of programs that are necessary for youngsters to be successful in their educational endeavours.

The board endorses the province's desire to ensure that all students receive a sound basic education, and certainly one applauds the initiatives such as course requirements, career planning, prerequisites, co-operative education, work experience and co-instructional programs. I think it is very important to realize that those are part of the ongoing process that will enable our youngsters to acquire the skills that will make

them better members of society, productive members of society, with the kind of self-worth that we would want for our own children at any one given point in time.

At this point, we want to look very carefully at the essence of practical applications and I would ask Edith to comment in that area.

Mrs. Rabillard: Careful attention must be devoted to the quality of the courses and the attendant practical applications wherein students become more proficient in expressing themselves orally and in diverse applied written forms in English and are able to perform basic computational tasks and solve problems based on applied situations in the area of mathematics.

Applications related to life-skill situations motivate young people in that they see the relevance of that which they are being taught. I would like to give a few specific examples. In English, for example, in the oral side of it, let's have them practise interviewing skills, perhaps using a videotape so that they can see themselves.

Many youngsters fall short of their goal because they do not realize how they are coming across when they are being interviewed. Let them see it for themselves. Let them practise these things.

Telephone skills: If you cannot communicate well over the telephone these days, that is a real handicap. Many people do not realize that. I am sure you have all had the experience of trying to talk to people who were not clear, did not make clear what they were trying to say or were less than polite in their answers. If they could learn this as part of their English, they could see the practical value and it would really help them.

Debating: I cannot help thinking that if debating were taught in high school, as it was when I went, we would not see what we see in Parliament some times. Maybe I should not say that, but I think debating skills need—

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Most of us went through the system and we did that.

Mrs. Rabillard: But you did not learn it—or some people did not.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: That happens in Ottawa but not Queen's Park.

Mrs. Rabillard: Oh yes, definitely Ottawa.

In written English, let them fill out a few job applications. I am not talking about theoretical things. Get some actual job application forms from businesses and let the youngsters work through them. Let them not be frightened by it. Let them realize what is being asked. Let them

understand how important it is to be legible. Some of these things, if they are not taught, we sort of assume they will know. But they do not just get it by osmosis.

Résumés and how important they are and how to update them: Sometimes they will get help with the original résumé and then either stick with that when it is out of date or just do a sloppy job of trying to bring it up to date. Teach them how to write a résumé and how to update it.

Income tax forms: Okay, now I am getting into practical math. Teach income tax forms, working out budgets and adjusting them to cover emergencies. Work with actual rates and fictional purchases to see the real cost of credit, credit cards and credit plans. Too many young people run into problems because they do not understand how credit works.

Mortgages and insurance: There are so many practical things that I believe if more time were spent on them (a) the youngsters would really master them and (b) they would see the relevance of what is being taught. That would be a great motivation right there.

Another thing on English: I think it would be helpful if they could be taught to look at television programs critically. I can remember—I believe it was our very young chairman who spoke of going to high school eons ago, and if she went eons ago, I do not know how long ago I went—back when I went to high school, in war time, we had one assignment rather than a book review; we had to attend a movie and review it from the point of view of background music, of scenery, of costuming—all sorts of things that I had never even looked at before. I went to a show for the story or the star and that was all I knew.

I learned to look at movies critically. I think we should, and could, do the same thing for our youngsters with TV. We might end up with people who are more aware of what is garbage and, therefore, down the road there would be less garbage on TV.

Those were the points that I wanted to make regarding the practical applications.

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Mr. McCall: The Timiskaming Board of Education also feels that the requirement that all student take 30 credits has the potential to increase the dropout rate at a time when every effort is being made to reduce same. One could look, for example, and say that one becomes literate by taking five English courses as opposed to four; in other words, quantity is taking precedence over quality.

It would be better to introduce and inculcate into the English program many of the things Edith has mentioned, as well as such things as report-writing in technical areas, which would cause our young people to be able to write well, to express themselves well. All of us have had, I am sure, experiences whereby we have had a certain number of credits we needed to take, whether it be at university or not, and we are totally impressed with the reduced level of literacy as a result, as opposed to the increased level of literacy.

While it is commendable that the number of compulsory courses has increased, this does reduce the number of options and hence has a negative effective on technological studies at a time when this country requires skilled tradespersons. We are hoping to be able to inculcate into our program an apprenticeship program, for which we have the support of the Ministry of Skills Development. Hopefully, it will come to fruition this year, because we believe very strongly that our system has been too narrow in focus in education.

Indeed, if we can broaden the base of pre-apprenticeship entry programs—bringing people back into the school system, allowing them to have work experiences related to that pre-apprenticeship area, taking co-operative education credits as well and then entering into the apprenticeship mode—we will reduce dramatically the dropout rate in our own district.

I find it interesting that a certain other board, which probably should remain nameless, seeing that I used to work at it at one time, is copying our idea and of course taking due credit for same.

I think the important thing here is that you have to look at compulsory courses in relation to options and ensure that one is not hurting the other, so that the broader understanding of what education really is is understood by all parties.

It is really interesting; I remember a member of the Legislature, now a cabinet minister, who made a comment one time that he was glad that the school systems were getting back to the basics. He and I are good friends, so I will not name him in this process. Rather, I commented with a very interesting syllogism to him, which was: "You didn't have the basics when you were there; therefore you were not well-educated, therefore you are illiterate, therefore you are unfit for public office. Please qualify your comments." I found it rather interesting that in subsequent years he never seemed to go back to that statement again.

Of course, most people cannot define the basics intelligently anyway and you will get five different definitions from five different people. I think that is something this committee should look at pretty carefully. It was alluded to earlier in a question. What do we really call the basics and what are the basics in education? On that light note, we will now refer back to grade promotion.

Mrs. Rabillard: We feel very strongly that student performances at acceptable levels should supersede social promotion. This has been mentioned before. Twelve-year-olds are not all the same; it is not essential that they be in class with other 12-year-olds, rather that they are working at their level. This is far more important. I am speaking not only as a trustee and chairman of the education committee, but I have 20 years' teaching experience behind me too. I think I have an idea what I am speaking about here.

Effective grouping practices in concert with valid and reliable testing procedures should enhance student performance. Where acceptable progress has not been made, particularly in the primary division—and I wish that were in huge neon letters—students should not be promoted beyond their performance level. Parents must be made aware of the students' progress or lack thereof well in advance of decisions being made regarding promotions. I feel strongly that we need to be more honest in the reports that go home.

Although we are addressing the intermediate and senior divisions, the primary division is the best area in which the student can regroup his abilities, mature a little and succeed in his second try so well that he enjoys school. Failure is only a big deal if the adults around him make it so. Children adjust quickly, particularly to happy circumstances, and the success and praise of the second time around promote enjoyment and further success in school and lessen the chances of that student becoming a dropout.

Honesty is essential in reports—that is the whole truth. Do not avoid the negatives. They need to be said, if we are honest, and it is the only way to regain the trust and spirit of co-operation with the home that the school once had. It is less than honest to phrase comments in such a way that the parents are not clear what is meant. "Working to potential" is one phrase that comes to mind. How many parents know what it means? Sure, if they do not understand, they should go to ask the teacher; but let's face it, a good percentage of them, more than half, do not.

I have suffered through a good many parent-teacher nights where maybe half the parents showed up and, of those, three quarters were parents of really good students who just wanted to hear the nice things I could say about their children. The ones I really wanted to talk to did not come. Every teacher I have spoken to has told me the same thing. Let's be really honest; let's say what it really is on the report card. I am not saying, "Johnny is a bad boy"; I do not mean that. You are not going to be that negative, but "Johnny needs extra help, Johnny needs to work harder," this sort of thing. Say it clearly so that no one can misunderstand. If the student needs to work harder or needs extra help with a subject, the report should say so clearly.

Mrs. Wojick: On the concept of semestering, our board supports the concept of semestering. However, we think that all schools should be semestered. It should be one or the other, not some in semestering and some in a full year, because what happens then is that you have children finishing in January and waiting until September to get into a program. This leads to discouragement or waiting periods where they get working and then do not go back to school. If all the school systems were the same, and if it were semestering, the students see where they can go through the school system faster to accomplish their goals faster. It is more beneficial to them.

We do have some concerns with respect to the effects of semestering on disciplines such as core French and physical education in terms of continuity and involvement in cocurricular endeavours. If you are taking phys ed this semester, but you are not touching it for another three semesters, that is not beneficial. These are the things we are looking at. Time frames per day per discipline require thoughtful analysis, particularly in core courses offered at the basic and general levels. Some subjects require analysis and time for concept skills to be understood and assimilated. For example, mathematics and science were the very things that both Mrs. Rabillard and Mr. McCall were mentioning. A study should be made of the ramifications of semestering in the area aforementioned, because it is such a large area. Perhaps it should be studied just on its own, because it is a big field.

Also, the current teacher training systems need to be reviewed. The selection process for teacher trainees, in which undergraduate marks appear to be the major criterion for selection to admission to teaching training facilities, is inappropriate. There is one particular institute where if you do

not have X marks, you do not get in, whether or not you have the abilities. You may be very low in your marks, but you could be excellent teacher material. I have had teachers in my lifetime who were exceedingly intelligent people, you could not question their intelligence, but they could not teach their way out of a wet paper bag.

The assumptions that the academic background is the major characteristic required to be a successful teacher and that all other skills and characteristics can be taught in a one-year program are ludicrous. Neither is an appropriate assumption. It results in teachers who are probably able to teach advanced courses, but may not be suited to teaching general- or basic-level courses. Hence, effective teacher training and appropriate admission practices for faculties of education would enhance the quality of instruction provided at all levels and ensure that the concerns regarding the time frames required per discipline per semester would be resolved in an effective teaching-learning environment.

If you have students sitting in class for 76 minutes in the semestering system, where you are looking at a highly concentrated time frame, if the teacher can only command the attention of the students for 14 minutes, look at all the time that student has just wasted. Teacher training is very important, and the need is there to keep the attention. Maybe we have to get into more studies of how students learn. Maybe this is an advantage to help out.

1240

Semestering should be an integral part of the secondary and post-secondary school systems. If high schools are in it, universities and colleges should be into it too so that you can go from one level to the other smoothly, without a waiting period.

Streaming: The board supports the concept of streaming at the secondary level on the premise that the needs of the student must be met by appropriate grouping procedures without labelling. I think labelling is probably the biggest failure of the streaming system at this particular point in time. There are a lot of parents who will not put their child into a general program or a basic program because they feel their child has better abilities or higher intelligence. But it is not that. Maybe that is where the student's abilities lie. It does not mean that he is not intelligent because that is where his abilities are. That is just his ability. Not everybody can be a doctor or a lawyer. We need people who are plumbers. We need bakers. We need jewellery makers. Stream-

ing has to address those areas without the labelling.

In order to honour the intention of Bill 82, to provide instructional modes that challenge and stimulate the students as well as enhance their self-concept, it is essential that students be grouped in accordance with their level of competency and ability at any given point in time. Maybe at this point they are not in the bluebird section and maybe the robins are the best section. In a month's time, when they are confident in the skills that they have and in what they have learned, they are going to be in the robins. But if you put them automatically into the robins and they become discouraged, then they are going to hang back.

In specific areas where Bill 82 is mandated, it is the considered opinion of this board that the province should pay 100 per cent of the cost of same. Also, the grouping should be done as the result of the utilization of norm reference and criteria reference tests, as well as daily evaluation of student performance. Geographical norms should be considered first, over provincial and national norms, to compensate for differences that are the direct result of factors related to areas in which students reside.

In southern Ontario, it is very important to know your bus system, how the routes work. If a child cannot read properly and does not have the ability to rationalize out how to study the bus routes, it is detrimental to him. But a child who lives in northern Ontario, who does not live where there is a bus system, has to know how to survive when it is 40 degrees below zero and the bus has broken down and he is on the side of the road. This is very important, and we have to address that, because what applies in southern Ontario does not always apply in northern Ontario, and what applies in northern Ontario does not always apply in southern Ontario.

Also, various areas of northern Ontario are very different. You cannot make a particular ruling for a particular area. We are in Timiskaming and we have problems that Moosonee would not know anything about, and they have problems that we know nothing about. If we are governed by the same rulings that are made in Toronto, then it is disadvantageous to us.

Provincial and national norms would then provide an overview of performance on a more global basis. Consideration should be given to multi-phasing students according to their level of achievement throughout their years in elementary, secondary and post-secondary school. Boards have the responsibility to ensure that the staff

evaluation process in place contributes to the achievement of these objectives. If you are paying teachers to do a job, you have to know that job is being done well, that the students are coming out a product of what the goals of education are.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for your presentation. I must say that many of the points you raise, such as practical application, honesty in reports and some of your comments about the north, I very much agree with. One comment made by you, Mr. McCall, really surprised me. It puzzled me actually. You said that this morning it was discussed in our committee that students in certain areas of the province might have less intellectual capacity than others. I think that was what you were making reference to and I personally did not hear those types of comments. What I heard were comments about the fact that the north, and other areas of the province, would like to have the same resources so that their educational standards were the same as in other areas of the province. I would just ask you to elaborate on that.

Mr. McCall: I do not want to get into a digression on another submission that was presented but comments were made in the Sudbury presentation that inferred, perhaps incorrectly, that the higher your intelligence the more likely you were to go to southern Ontario to work. That is a false assumption and I think that needs to be clarified for this time.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. No, I quite see what you mean in that reference. I was trying to isolate your comment and I could not quite figure it out.

Thank you very much, Edith, for your compliment about my youth. Just for your information, I graduated 20 whole years ago from high school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Which is an eon by anybody's standards.

Madam Chairman: At least several. In fact it seems as if it was in a galaxy far, far away.

Mr. Keyes: She took a long time to get through the system. She is a lot older than she looks.

Madam Chairman: Want to see my grey hair? Anyway, we are short of time. The members have to check out by 1 p.m. The hotel has given us our marching orders. The clerk has mentioned she has room 310.

Mr. Keyes: Are you going to invite everybody up to 310?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: This is no time for hospitality.

Madam Chairman: We do have 11 whole minutes so I just wondered if we could make the best use of it before we have to leave. We have, I believe, Mrs. O'Neill first on the list.

Mrs. O'Neill: I would like you to speak to two phrases I see in your brief that I have not encountered before. One is under "Ontario Schools: Intermediate and Senior Divisions," paragraph 2. You talk about "co-instructional" programs. The other, just so you can prepare yourselves, is under "Streaming" on the final folio, "multi-phasing" students.

Mr. McCall: First of all, one of the things we are trying to stress in education—and perhaps you would call it something else; you may call it extracurricular activities. I do not look at it that way because I look at education as a package and when you are talking about co-instructional programs, there are two parts to it. First of all, it is gender-free. Second, they are activities related to the disciplines you are being taught during the day. A simplistic notion of that I suppose would be a sports endeavour, but more aptly it might be a dramatic endeavour. What I saw in education for so many years was a distinction made between what happened in the classroom and what happened in the extracurricular activities, which to me was a very stupid notion. That really is what I am getting at by co-instructional.

Mrs. O'Neill: Are you suggesting that some of the extracurricular is actually counted in the number of hours for credits?

Mr. McCall: Not at all. It is an application of that which you have learned in the classroom.

Mrs. O'Neill: Now the other, if you would, please.

Mr. McCall: Years ago—I will not call it eons, but I suppose by your definition it is eons ago—when I was doing some work on a pre-doctoral work, I was looking at some multi-phasing students and I found it interesting in Melbourne High School in Florida, for example—I am not going to comment too much on Florida.

Mrs. O'Neill: No, people up north seem to go to Florida.

1250

Mr. McCall: One of the things that impressed me about what was happening in Melbourne High School was that the youngsters entering into the secondary element were multi-phased. Extensive testing was done of a meaningful

nature, and the youngsters were multi-phased by discipline. In other words, they might be in phase five in math, phase three in English and whatever.

What I found most intriguing about the process, in studying it very thoroughly, was that the youngsters became oblivious to the fact one might be 13 and the other 15, but that they were working at a relatively common level of achievement. They were meeting success in that approach. In fact, some of the youngsters, by the time they finished what we would call grade 11, had completed their secondary schooling and were working in relationship with the University of Florida, taking some of their university courses in secondary school. You see, there was not that stigma attached. You did not have to be a university professor to teach a university subject any more than you have to be a secondary teacher to teach a secondary subject.

So there was a natural progression. I think much more consideration should be given to that. I am not excited about the 14-year-old who happens to be at Berkeley. There is much more to education than that. I think Ontario could really look very carefully at the whole issue of multi-phasing students in a much more meaningful mode. That is really what I was referring to there, otherwise I would go on at length.

Mrs. O'Neill: In your board then, is it possible to gain a high school credit in some of your grade 7 or 8 programs and, in the same way, are you offering your—for the want of a better term, the label—"gifted students" a chance to gain some university credits in their final years of high school?

Mr. McCall: It is the latter part we cannot do at the moment, because we do not have a working relationship with a university or a community college. In some instances, we have been able to provide credits for some elementary students at the secondary level, yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: We have Mr. Johnston, Mr. Mahoney and Mr. Cooke. So perhaps you could limit your questions to one or two very brief ones.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I will do that as a matter of comment on one, and ask the question of the other. I think your point about the labels being harmful, around streaming, is an important thing. It is very true. Those labels stick very hard. I find it difficult to know what euphemism can replace the present pejorative notions. The word "general" is not a very nasty word and yet it

has developed all those labels. When you have structural separation and segregation, I think it is very difficult to overcome the notion of labelling within the community, whether it is the teaching community or whether it is the community of students and parents.

But the question I would like, if I might, since I have been limited this time, and rightly so, is on grade promotion. You seem to be taking a different position from most of the boards that we have heard from, in being opposed, it seems, to social promotion as a concept, or leaning much more toward grade promotion, if I have been listening to the examples that you were giving.

Can you tell me if, in fact, for instance, you would find this antithetical to your point of view? Some people have been suggesting to us that, in fact, grade promotion for kindergarten through to grade 3 is a very arbitrary, meaningless kind of a technique because of the huge differences in the capacity of students, just given ages the kids enter the school system and the huge range that can happen between a girl born at the beginning of the year, and a boy who is born later in the year, both entering grade 1 at the same time and therefore, all the boys would be held back essentially, if we strictly interpreted the notion of grade promotion at that age.

I am just wondering what your policies are in terms of grade promotion and what your reaction is to this notion of looking at things in a divisional fashion, rather than in a grade fashion, as we look at the notion of promoting or holding back a child.

Mrs. Wojick: I think at the early levels that is where it is very important to have the child held back—I am going to use a "for instance"; my own child, for instance. She struggled through grade 1 and had a great deal of trouble with grade 1. She came into grade 2 and again she was going to be promoted because her peer group was in grade 2 so therefore the teacher did not want her to be held back, because she was one of these children who came in later—when you are talking about children born at different times coming into school at different times.

I said, "No, you're going to hold her back," because she was struggling. This is the second year that she had struggled. So she was kept back. She said, "I'll go and talk to the principal." I said, "When you speak to the principal, tell him the mother does not want her promoted." My daughter went from a point where she was in the tail end of the classroom, struggling every inch of the way and not looking forward to school and really having a problem, to the top four, and that

is where she has been ever since. She is now in grade 10.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is a very interesting perspective because it is exactly the opposite of what we have been hearing, both from educational theorists and most of the other boards that have presented to us.

Mrs. Rabillard: May I also add a word? Most of my teaching experience, except when I was in one-room country schools—and I had that wonderful experience too—most of my years were in the primary grade and I know what a great difference in maturity there is in children. This really is the bottom line in those early grades. When I taught, in most of the years I taught, the youngsters I had, had not had the opportunity to have kindergarten. They came to me in grade 1, straight from home, from a very varied background. Very often they needed to catch up.

The idea of taking from junior kindergarten to the end of grade 3 as a primary division and allowing them to move at their own rate, not necessarily year by year, but just at their own rate, I think is excellent. It might perhaps be a little more difficult to manage because your class size would be changing during the school year, but from the point of view of the child, I believe this is excellent.

Mr. McCall: It is not a new idea. In fact, when I was two years old, in 1938 in Hamilton, they employed the unit system which is exactly that. Some youngsters finished their primary division earlier than others, some finished at the norm and some took an extra year and were the richer and the better for it.

Mr. Mahoney: I am impressed by your memory. I will be brief, but actually I do not have to. I flew in this morning, so I do not have to check out at one o'clock, but in the interests of being co-operative, I will be brief.

By the way, I will just tell you I shared a similar experience with my oldest boy in having to go through the gut-wrenching and heart-breaking decision of holding him back in grade 7. We ultimately did. He is in grade 12. It was the best thing we ever did. I think you have to look at it on an individual basis. It might not be the best thing for some kids, but in his particular case, as in the case of your daughter, it made the difference, in my opinion, as to how far he was going to go in school.

Briefly, I would like you to be more specific in your comments about different rulings, rulings being set in Toronto, your example of the youngster, when it is 40 degrees below, being left on the side of the road. I would have thought

that, as a northern school board or any kind of a school board anywhere in the province, you would have the flexibility in your programming to teach things of particular concern to your community.

It would seem to me that the people who set policy on school boards, the elected representatives, usually live in that community and have a base in that community. The philosophy might tend to be community-oriented. I am not talking about a math program that perhaps should be related in a similar way across the province, which is what I heard Sudbury saying this morning, by the way, that their kids should have the opportunity for education equal to that of the kids in the south because many of them will end up in the south just as a natural migration. Maybe that is going to change. I would have thought you had that flexibility and you gave me the impression you do not.

Mrs. Wojick: Last year, for two years in a row, we taught an outdoor education program in the particular area I represent. I am 40 miles from the board office. This worked out very, very well. Unfortunately, we had to cut the program because there was not funding available for it. Many of the schools were starting to take part in this and it was very valuable to the students. We had to cut the funding. We have a great deal of problems. As to Bill 82, it is unfortunate Mr. Keyes is not here. He had made a comment that—

Madam Chairman: Actually, Mr. Keyes is still in the room.

Mrs. Wojick: Good.

Madam Chairman: He is listening.

Mrs. Wojick: He had made the comment that they send enough money for the learning disabilities. Just for a "for instance," our board is estimating \$1.5 million in special education coming up next year, of which we will get \$747,000 in grants. We are at a deficit of about half. It is not equal funding. When we have hefty bills like this and when we have a lot of special education students, and we are talking not just about students with learning disabilities, but we are talking about the trainable mentally retarded too, that is very difficult to handle financially when we do not get the proper funds. That is why programs are cut.

1300

Mr. Keyes: Just as an aside, would you not teach them in the course of, say, social studies, that type of thing, teach the specific programs that might be indigenous to your community?

Mrs. Wojick: No, we cannot. We do not have it.

Mrs. Rabillard: We would if we could.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Just to go back for a second to grade promotion, I agree with the concept of unit or division progress, but I do not understand the policy of your board. Why is there actual grade promotion or holding kids back if you are not looking at having to complete grade 1 at the end of grade 1 but at the child's rate?

Mr. McCall: Our comment here is one that we are really talking about in terms of a provincial mandate. In other words, there should be a provincial policy of looking at this whole issue and realizing there are exceptional circumstances. It seems to me in education over time there has been too much of an emphasis on socially promoting people and in some respects a lack of accountability for the performance level of students.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Why would that issue even come up if you were talking about a child progressing at his or her own rate so that we would not be looking at some artificial date of June of every year for determining whether a child has achieved the end of that grade? Then the issue of social progress, promotion, would not even come up.

Mrs. Rabillard: Excuse me, when we prepared this we were working from the OSIS document and trying to respond directly to it and to things we felt were there. This is what we responded to.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: I am looking specifically at the primary level and your comments about promotion at the primary level.

Mrs. Rabillard: Yes, but it was put in there because it was a response to something—I do not remember exactly what—that was in the OSIS document.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: How does your board actually operate with grade promotion at the primary level now?

Mr. McCall: We endeavour to use as much as we can the unit process and individual decision-making in terms of meeting the needs of students and increasing the grouping not only for English but for mathematics—particularly those two disciplines—such that youngsters are able to progress at their own rate as opposed to being artificially grade 3s or artificially grade 4s. Our concern has been that across the province there has been a significant amount of social promotion.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: What would you think about eliminating the label of grades all together and just having divisions?

Mr. McCall: I think you would have to do a fair bit of public relations and have public awareness among the general public because they do look at school systems and they do look for grade 3. In a school of which I was principal, I removed the grades after much consultation with my parent group. That is fine, but you have to do a great deal of work. You could do that. More important in some respects is the quality of the testing that is done. We did not spend anywhere near as much time as one would elaborate here on criterion reference testing and norm reference testing because that is a whole area that I think needs thoughtful study. The minister has announced testing and so on.

From my experience, and I have an extensive experience in evaluation, I hope that will be used by those in the ministry to have a look at the reliability and validity of the tests being used. In other words, are they measuring what they purport to measure? Is the test being used written at the appropriate reading level? I remember doing an analysis earlier of grade 4 tests in mathematics that were written at the grade 6 reading level and the inverse in grade 6. Then you have to ask yourself, what are you measuring? I remember when the Ontario assessment instrument pools first came out, the math one. To describe it as abysmal would be kind.

Many parts of the geography ones that have come out just recently are much better. Again, they are still flawed. For anybody to make any sweeping judgements out of them would be open to question. They need some well-qualified people, not just in the discipline and not just in the subject area itself, but somebody who knows something about evaluation and the reliability and validity of test items, discrimination indexes and so on. I think that is going to be critical if we are going to make judgemental statements about relative performance across this province in terms of how well youngsters are performing in specific areas. Unfortunately, we do not have the time to go into that one, but that is worth a few hours all by itself.

Madam Chairman: Unfortunately, we do not have those few hours. In fact, we have set a new record for our select committee on education. We are now one hour and seven minutes overtime. I think that can be attributed to the fact that the Sudbury presentations this morning were so focused, far more focused than in any other area of the province we have been to so far, which

resulted in the members having some very stimulating questions to ask. I would like to congratulate you on that and give our apologies. We would like to spend those extra two hours with you. Thank you very much.

As I mentioned to members, the clerk has

retained room 310 for your luggage. If you could go up immediately, drop your key off at the desk and take your luggage to room 310, if you are very lucky, you may have a few minutes for lunch.

The committee recessed at 1:06 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:32 p.m. in the Trafalgar Room, Peter Piper Inn, Sudbury, Ontario.

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to reconvene the select committee on education as we continue our review of OSIS, semestering, streaming and grade promotion. This afternoon our first presenter is Sharon Lalonde. Would you come forward please.

I would mention to the members that we have had two slight changes in the agenda. Sharon Lalonde will be presenting at 2:30 p.m. and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association at 3 p.m., followed at 3:30 p.m. by the Ontario Society for Autistic Citizens. Please note those changes to your agenda.

Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee. We are looking forward to hearing your presentation today. Members will note that it has just been distributed by the clerk, and it is called Mainstreaming; so please locate that brief.

You may start whenever you like. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation including question time, but we may have somewhat of a problem sticking to our schedule unless we are slightly better behaved this afternoon.

Mr. Mahoney: Crack the whip.

Madam Chairman: Crack the whip, okay. I will be very stern. Thirty minutes is the total presentation time. Would you please begin by introducing yourself for purposes of electronic Hansard?

THE LEARNING CENTRE

Mrs Lalonde: I am Sharon Lalonde and I am here on behalf of the Learning Centre. This is Nicole Tessier. She is my backup.

Madam Chairman: Moral support.

Mrs. Lalonde: Yes.

Mainstreaming is not the answer for all children, nor will it happen for many children. They will remain neglected in a special education class. A special education class where 12 or more children are dumped without individual programs is not the answer either.

My daughter, Lisa, is a prime example of our educational system failing. She was put into a special education class in September 1983 after unsuccessfully completing grade 1 with the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board. I was told she would receive

individual instruction and would be integrated in French, physical education, science, etc.

After spending three years in a special-ed class, seven years in all with the Sudbury separate school board, Lisa still could not read or write. I was informed verbally by a special-ed consultant that Lisa's IQ was such that she should be reading and writing. They did not know why she was not. Her report card showed passing grades, as you can see by example 1. It is at the back.

We decided to have her tested at the Hospital for Sick Children. Lisa was 11 years old. She could not read or write. She counted on her fingers and reversed continuously. Any math skills were impossible for her. I was advised to teach her life skills. Example 2 is a story she wrote as part of a test at the Hospital for Sick Children in October 1986.

We knew Lisa was capable of more and we had to give her that chance. We made a very difficult decision. We withdrew her from the system and enrolled her in the Learning Centre, a private school for the learning disabled here in Sudbury. After 18 months, we took her back to the Hospital for Sick Children to be retested. They were amazed at her progress, and example 3 is a story she wrote for the test in April 1988.

Does the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board not have qualified people to test and diagnose these children? Do they not have individual programs for these children? They certainly did not meet the needs of my child.

Thirty-four children are enrolled in the Learning Centre. These parents, on top of paying their taxes, are paying tuition and fund-raising in order to have their children educated and they are also supplying transportation. Four of our children are funded. Three of them are native Canadian children who have their tuition paid by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. One of them who is from Quebec has his tuition paid for by the Quebec Ministry of Education. How can this happen in this wealthy province of Ontario? It is a pay-now or pay-later situation. We can educate these children now or we can give them disability pensions later. We can deal with their frustrations now or we can deal with them later in the courts.

At the Learning Centre, children, adolescents and adults, people from age four to adulthood, work side by side towards a common goal, the

social, emotional and academic development of children, youths and adults who have suffered frustration and failure in the regular school system. How many more of these children are out there? Let us educate all our children according to their abilities and then we can mainstream them into society and into productive lives.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Did you have any additional comments before we go to members' questions or are you open for questions now?

Mrs. Lalonde: We also have an adult there as a student whose tuition is paid for by the Workers' Compensation Board.

I do not know what else to say. I think I have said it all.

Mr. Campbell: I want to clarify for the committee that the Learning Centre is the name of the school that was referred to this morning. It is a private school that is dealing in this area; there was one school, not two. Mrs. Lalonde has been very active in this because of her daughter's situation. I think it is fair to say the organization really feels strongly because it is recognized enough that some government agencies are paying tuition for some students, but other students do not have the benefit. I do not want to put words in your mouth, but I think it is fair to say that is the situation.

Mrs. Lalonde: That is right.

Mr. Campbell: What some parents deal with in mainstreaming or streaming is another aspect of the committee's work and deliberations. There are no questions from me. I am very familiar with the case, but I just wanted to point out a few things to the committee on Mrs. Lalonde's behalf.

1440

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the brief, Mrs. Lalonde. Can you tell us what the diagnosis was from the Hospital for Sick Children? What did they determine her problems were? You did not mention those.

Mrs. Lalonde: I was right. She has been diagnosed as having a chromosome problem. That was just discovered this spring, in April 1988. Before that, she was diagnosed as being hypotonic, which is an abnormal weakness of muscle; therefore, they do not develop as quickly as other children. I was told she would do everything other children did; it would just take her longer.

Sick Kids at the beginning told me to teach her life skills. They have since got in touch with the Learning Centre and they will be sending

someone here to observe because they could not believe the difference.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You asked a question—I am not sure whether it was rhetorical or real—about the assessment done by the Catholic board here. Was there no assessment done of her?

Mrs. Lalonde: Yes. There was an assessment done at the end of grade 1, where they decided she should go into special ed. I agreed because I knew Lisa was not comfortable in a regular classroom.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Who did the assessment? Do you know if it was a psychometrist, a psychologist?

Mrs. Lalonde: I do not recall right now. There is a Mrs. Pancho who works for them, but I am not positive if she is the one who did it. The woman I dealt with was Mrs. McNair. She was a consultant with special ed at that time. I do not know if she is still there.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Did you have a chance at that point to decide whether you agreed, first, with the assessment—I gather you did, that she needed special help—but also with the kind of help she was being given?

Mrs. Lalonde: There really is not a choice in the kind of help. When they put a child in special ed, from my experience it is sort of a melting pot for all the children who have problems.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: In theory, it is not supposed to be under the law. That is the reason I raise it, because there is an individual placement of the child which should be taking place based on an individual assessment, depending on what the child's needs might be: physiological, dyslexia or whatever they might be.

Mrs. Lalonde: When I mentioned dyslexia to the special ed consultant, she as much as told me that I did not know what I was talking about. She was right. I really did not understand what it was all about, but I expected her to tell me. Lisa had her eyes checked by a Dr. Schonberger here in the city and he said there was absolutely nothing wrong with her vision and he gave me some information on dyslexia. That is when I questioned the consultant. She just said it was a whole raft of learning disabilities and just brushed it off.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I can understand the problem a parent has with this, in knowing whether to challenge a decision by a board or presuming that the special ed class would be appropriate, etc., but if you are unhappy with that, there is a process which you are supposed to be able to take called the individual placement

and review committee, IPRC, where you can go and say: "The board cannot provide the kind of help my child needs. This is not an appropriate setting for her" or whatever. You can even make the argument that the appropriate place for the child to go is the Learning Centre or a private centre. If you can prove your case, that they cannot provide or it is not an appropriate placement, then under the law, under Bill 82, they are supposed to pick up the costs of your child going to the Learning Centre, just to indicate how another form of funding for a private centre goes.

There are many catch-22s in that process, but were you ever advised you could take that course?

Mrs. Lalonde: No, I was not advised. We became so frustrated. When I came back from Sick Kids in 1986, I think it was, and they had advised me to teach Lisa life skills, we just felt we had nowhere to turn. We had been dealing with the separate school board for so long. We were not getting any results. We were not getting any questions answered. We just decided to move her. I had heard about the Learning Centre before. As I said, it was a difficult decision because one is afraid to leave the realm of the system. It is scary. People had told me, "Oh, they don't have the services you need" and all kinds of things. You listen, because it is a scary thing to do. Finally, we just had no choice and now I am sorry I did not do it sooner.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What was intended in the legislation that came into effect fully in 1985, which has not helped your daughter at all, was that a child's needs were to be identified and then boards were now going to be obligated for the first time ever to provide that help, and if they could not provide the help to pay for the help some place else. It used to be before that we had to fight vocational rehabilitation to get a child like Lisa into a place like the Learning Centre.

Clearly, the system has not worked in terms of just your ability to access it. That seems to me to be as much of the problem as anything else.

Mrs. Lalonde: I had asked for the results of Lisa's tests at one point from the consultant and she would not give them to me. She told me I would not understand them. She is right. I probably would not have, but I am sure I could have found someone who did.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I do not think most of the results are that difficult to interpret, frankly.

Mrs. O'Neill: Just for the record, it is the identification and placement review committee. I

am very sorry that somehow or other you were not made aware of it or that that service was not offered, because I think that would have been helpful.

I want to ask you a bit about exhibit 1 here, which you have from the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board, because what you have in the body of your article and what is here do not seem to be exactly true. Lisa is able to read is what I felt is stated there, and in the body of your document you say that was not true.

Mrs. Lalonde: Do you want me to answer that now?

Mrs. O'Neill: I would like to know. You have put this as an exhibit and you have something different in the document. I really want to understand what the situation is.

Mrs. Lalonde: She was not reading as such. She has a phenomenal memory and in her reader she could read, but it was all memorized. If you gave her anything other than her reader to read, she could not read it.

Mrs. O'Neill: May I ask why you submitted this document to state that the diagnosis which was given by a publicly supported school system was not correct?

Mrs. Lalonde: It was not correct. I do not understand how you can receive passing grades in language, etc., when you cannot read or write. You can see from the test, which was the first test done at Sick Kids, that she cannot write.

Mrs. O'Neill: And the first test, when you went to the medical program at Sick Kids, was concurrent with this particular report?

Mrs. Lalonde: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. I just wanted to clarify those facts.

Madam Chairman: It was interesting. I do not think you were present this morning, but we had a presentation from the Timiskaming school board and one of the presenters mentioned that it is very important to have honesty in reports. She went on about how a lot of euphemisms are used in describing a child's progress, so the parent really does not understand where the child is. I was just thinking of that when I was looking through the report.

Mrs. Lalonde: When I met with the people from the school board, I found the first thing they told you was how well dressed and how well behaved your child was and the rest was gibberish.

Mr. Keyes: I wanted to ask a bit more about the Learning Centre. I am not sure whether that is a franchise name. We have a learning centre in Kingston, there is a learning centre school in Toronto I am familiar with and you have one here. Is it merely the name coined by the people who run it here?

I want to know a bit more about it because I think what you are really saying inside the letter is that you did not get the satisfaction in the school system to deal with the problem your daughter had, but did in another educational setting. From my knowledge of the other learning centres, they are simply a very intense, directed form of remediation for specific problems experienced by a children that have been withdrawn from the full range of regular school activities. Is that basically what has happened here?

There are usually teachers in our situation I am aware of. In Toronto, there are teachers who quite often do it after hours. They are teachers who are on part-time contracts or ones who did not go into the regular system but are there, but they work in a very specialized way in the area which has been diagnosed as the weakness. Can you elaborate a bit more on the program? My contention is that many of those same remediation techniques should be available in both our school systems, and that is what the government has attempted to do under Bill 82, but it appears that you did not get adequate information in order to take advantage of what should be in the system, which would not necessitate additional fees being paid by yourself.

1450

Mrs. Lalonde: The director of our school is a teacher at the university, at the teachers' college here. It lists her qualifications here.

Mr. Keyes: No, I know they are all qualified teachers.

Mrs. Lalonde: Very.

Mr. Keyes: I am just looking at the point of the program for them. Their program is basically the type of thing we would expect to find in a good remediation program in either the public or the separate school system.

Mrs. Lalonde: Each one of our children has an individual—

Mr. Keyes: Individual tutor, probably.

Mrs. Lalonde: Would you like to answer that? Maybe you can answer it better than I can.

Mrs. Tessier: I am not exactly sure what it is you are looking for.

Mr. Keyes: A little more discussion as to the type of programming and remediation that is carried on in this learning centre.

Mrs. Tessier: First of all, most of the kids who join the school are very dyslexic. I know my son was. He could not read or write at nine, when he joined the school. They do start on a one-to-one basis with the child. First of all, they have to get him out of his frustrations, because the child is very frustrated from being neglected. Then they work with that child on a one-to-one basis, starting him to read and write very slowly, to the child's pace. Then they work the child into the program with one other child or two or three and then into a group of 10.

Mr. Keyes: They basically work on a full-day basis, I am assuming.

Mrs. Tessier: Yes.

Mr. Keyes: It is not two hours a day, or anything else.

Mrs. Tessier: No. It is a regular school program, nine to three or four, Monday to Friday. They have fewer holidays than the regular school system.

Mr. Keyes: And none of the professional activity days.

Mrs. Lalonde: No.

Mr. Keyes: I guess it is professional development now instead of PA.

Mr. Mahoney: You are the PA.

Mr. Keyes: That is right. The point I am trying to make is that I think the system should be able to provide that for you to a greater extent than you have experienced. I am not downgrading learning centres in any way; so do not take it that way. I think they have flourished because of a lack of ability of the systems to provide that same one-on-one training in areas of deficiency. To give them their credit, as well as the school system, all you have to do is look at your daughter's report card. Even though she was in special education, she was still being taught French, math and all of the other ingredients of a full-fledged academic program—phys ed, health, science, etc. I would assume it is much more narrowed and directed in your learning centre.

Mrs. Lalonde: Yes, but they are taught phys ed, science, health, social studies and all of the other things.

Mr. Keyes: They are as well?

Mrs. Lalonde: Yes, they are. They do also have extracurricular activities. They go swimming and a lot of things. In this report card, if you

note, it says that she has excellent progress in the swimming program.

Mr. Keyes: Yes, I noticed that.

Mrs. Lalonde: That is about all that she had excellent progress in. Her father taught her to swim.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I want to follow up a little bit on what Mr. Keyes was talking about, because the kind of program you are talking about for dyslexia, for instance, that kind of concentration is available in many boards around the province at this point and being dealt with in a style similar to what the Learning Centre seems to be doing, just from the brief part you are talking to us about. It is disappointing to hear that you were not able to try to accommodate those needs within the system, because it is usually quite expensive using these kinds of programs. Are you willing to tell us how much it costs you?

Mrs. Lalonde: It is \$6,500 a year for the parents who pay full tuition. Some parents pay a portion and they fund-raise the rest.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Which is cheaper than what some parents are paying for alternative things.

Mrs. Lalonde: Yes, it is.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Are you a member of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario?

Mrs. Lalonde: We are, as a group, the parents of the school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Again, even with that, I would have thought that as individual parents and being members of that as a group, that association would be wanting to try to find some remedy, either financially or within the system, for you. I think you should raise your concerns with them, because they can assist you to go to an identification and placement review committee to make your case that it should be provided within the system. If the system says it cannot provide it, then it should pay for the alternative approach you have, or provide exactly what you are after, hopefully. That is proving to be effective within the school system. Rather than your having either to be \$6,500 out every year or having to keep your child away from the mainstream for longer periods than you probably want in the long run, you have some options that can still be taken at this point.

Pursuing it through an association like that will really help you at the local IPRC level. I really suggest that you do some strategizing around that, both for educational purposes, for Lisa, but also for monetary purposes for you.

Mrs. Lalonde: And for the other children out there who cannot go to these centres.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Of course.

Mrs. Lalonde: Either their parents do not know of them or they do not have one in their community. There is no one to fight for these little kids. They are not getting anything.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If they will not help you, then call Sterling Campbell because he has little or nothing to do. He would be glad to assist.

Madam Chairman: Correct me if I am wrong, Mr. Johnston, but in order to be given an IPRC, I think the child has to be registered in the public system at the time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But all you have to do is do that.

Madam Chairman: That is right.

Mrs. Lalonde: I would never put her back in the system now. I could not take that chance.

Madam Chairman: No; just for a very short time, just long enough to have the IPRC. I do not believe there is an ability to have the IPRC review if the child is not in the publicly funded system at the time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There are ways around it.

Madam Chairman: Even if it is registering them for two weeks, it might be necessary to do that at the time of the IPRC. If there is no availability in the publicly funded system, then the province would pick up the price tag for putting your child in the Learning Centre. That is my understanding.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The board will.

Madam Chairman: The board. Sorry about that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The issue is likely to be dealt with this fall, that business of not having your child in, because it is a catch-22 where people are just unwilling to take that step again. For some of us here, that is all we want to see in the changes, but that at least will be coming. I think it is very much worth your while, as members of an association, to get together and strategize about where, as a group, you want to go on this.

Under the law, there is an obligation for the public systems to provide the necessary programs for your children. I cannot speak to all the merits of the case at this stage, obviously, but you certainly have a case that can be taken. The fact that it has not been taken is problematic.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for your appearance before our committee today. I

hope some of the advice Mr. Johnston has given you may prove fruitful in the future.

Mrs. Lalonde: Yes, it has.

Madam Chairman: We wish the best of luck to you and your children's education.

Our next presentation will be the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Nipissing unit. Please come forward.

I would just note for the members' attention, since I was told to crack the whip, we are exactly on time. Let's try to keep that up in the afternoon.

Mr. Keyes: You will notice I keep my questions short.

Madam Chairman: Yes, members were very co-operative in keeping questions short and to the point.

Welcome to our committee. I think you were here during the previous presentation so you know about the 30-minute time allocation.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They were here all morning.

Madam Chairman: That is right. You may be ready to go home by now.

You could just start by identifying yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO ENGLISH CATHOLIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION, NIPISSING UNIT

Mrs. Soule: My name is Kathy Soule. I am the president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Nipissing unit. With me is Carolyn Stevens. She is the second vice-president of our association and as well is the co-ordinator of exceptional services for the Nipissing District Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Carolyn is also a member of the special education advisory council committee. With the direction the presentations have taken today, I think that information might be valuable a little later on in our presentation.

The Nipissing unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association consists of 220 elementary and secondary school teachers. We would like to thank you for allowing us to present our reactions and concerns as educators regarding the four topics in Ontario education: streaming, grade promotion, semestering and, of course, OSIS.

1500

Streaming, as we understand it, is the classification of pupils for the purpose of forming instructional groups, ostensibly with a high degree of similarity in regard to certain factors that affect learning. Other terms synonymous

with streaming are homogeneous grouping, ability grouping, tracking and levelling.

It is an acknowledged fact that each child's rate of physical, emotional and cognitive development is unique although sequential. As with every rule, there are exceptions. In education, these exceptions are children whose differentiating rates of development demand differentiated programming and flexible timing in order for them to progress and to obtain an education.

Grouping is initiated as soon as the need is perceived in order to offset emotional dropouts as early as the primary level. I must underline here that we are speaking for the Nipissing district. Educators attempt to provide programs that will ensure success experiences for the child in order to promote confidence and, ultimately, more successes. Children experience success at different levels; therefore, programs must be at different levels.

Teachers address this need by placing children in groups according to their abilities in specific subject areas or assigned tasks. Thus, a child may be placed in a higher-functioning group in one subject area and a lower-functioning group in another area. Ability groups do not cross the boundaries of all subject areas for any given child. This process allows students to maximize their strengths while receiving meaningful programming in the areas where remediation, intensive or extensive instruction, is required.

This process, perceived as ability grouping in the Radwanski report, is not seen that way by us as educators in the Nipissing English Catholic schools. We see this process as one of ongoing remediation and not as the change advocated by Mr. Radwanski.

Streaming at the secondary level is a continuation of the educational approach which we as teachers see as most beneficial but not unrealistically demanding. Students are directed into different streams to become educated and not driven by frustration to drop out of school or, worse still, move into the world of drugs, alcohol or even suicide.

Graduation does not ensure an education. Education is the tool that allows students to participate in and contribute to society. The learner can participate in and contribute to society without achieving the singular level of education that Mr. Radwanski defines as graduation.

The streaming process provides needed remediation on an ongoing basis throughout a student's school years. Accordingly, students capable of working at the advanced level will

experience the challenges necessary to maximize their potential. It is from this group that Ontario society will obtain its intellectual élite and ultimate experts.

This does not preclude that students from other streams will not excel in their chosen fields. Many contributors to society at large have backgrounds that are not based in academia. These people have made significant contributions in areas of art, technology, marketing, service industries, public relations and transportation, to name only a few.

It is our recommendation then that ability grouping be maintained in Ontario schools, and that the ministry sponsor intensive in-service to develop essential strategies to provide a meaningful education at the different levels.

Grade promotion as such is not an acceptable form of advancement. Serious consideration must be given to the child's ability to master skills and concepts. In our schools, students may repeat once per division if there is a serious deficit which we as educators feel could best be remediated through intensive repetition, using different strategies and materials.

We strongly endorse the attitude that the child will gain the necessary concepts through the spiral curriculum approach and the attention of a caring teacher. Spiral curriculum might more clearly be defined as maximum exposure at different intervals to all of the concepts that ultimately form an education. This is a sound process that addresses the needs of children in their accumulation of the concepts that formulate an education and that must be retained.

Much research has been done which supports this. We are currently piloting a reading program in one of our schools, known as the Unicorn Language Series, which is based very strongly on the spiral curriculum, and it is achieving success. Educators believe this process addresses the wellbeing of the whole child as opposed to a concentrated concern for specific content or concept. Success begets success.

Summer school remediation is a double form of punishment for the child who has failed to acquire a given concept or an acceptable grade, most often due to reasons beyond the student's control. These reasons may include a lack of ability, a lack of readiness or the lack of an environment conducive to learning, whether it be at home or at school.

Social promotion is acceptable. It recognizes the whole child. It does not recognize academic progress as the only variable. As educators, we must consider social, emotional, physical and

moral development as components of achievement.

Our recommendations are that social promotion be maintained—and this was a discretionary power, of course; that intensive in-service be provided to educators at both the elementary and secondary levels regarding the need to consider the whole child when considering promotion, and that teachers be in-serviced on different evaluative methods and techniques.

Regarding standardized testing, it is only one means of evaluating progress or of diagnosing a difficulty. Within our own relatively small jurisdiction, we have mentally handicapped and mentally delayed students, visually and hearing impaired students, students with severe communication problems, and socially and emotionally maladjusted students. The progress of these children cannot be measured by standardized tests. As well, our students come from varying backgrounds. We educate children from many cultural and ethnic backgrounds, such as the native Canadian, French, Vietnamese, Polish and Italian. Students come from varied socioeconomic conditions as well as urban and rural communities. In addition to this, some students travel up to an hour or more each day to attend school. All of these factors figure significantly in the variance of test results.

We recommend that standardized testing not be used, as it is not a valid measure of a child's ability due to cultural, socioeconomic and demographic limitations, and that educators continue to use a wide variety of testing to measure the child's progress.

In our jurisdiction, we have had only one year of semestering in our single co-ed secondary school. We do not feel that this gives us a basis for serious discussion or for objective evaluation regarding this particular issue.

Regarding OSIS, we, as teachers, recognize the value of the credit system in that it allows students to make choices which respond to their strengths and interests. The compulsory components ensure that the student is educated in those areas deemed necessary by the Ministry of Education. The credit system encourages students to stay in school longer—I expect questions on that. By allowing students to take advanced-level courses in their areas of strength and general- and basic-level courses in their weaker areas, students can look forward to graduating. Compulsory advanced-level courses for all students in all subjects would result in failure for many students. These students would never graduate. Society must accept that graduates

have differing backgrounds, abilities and limitations.

In the Nipissing Catholic secondary school, the whole range of courses at different levels of ability has only been fully implemented recently. We recognize the need to educate our teachers as to the value of courses at the basic and general levels as well as to the dignity and self-esteem of students enrolled in these courses.

We recommend that OSIS be retained, with an ongoing evaluation to be summarized in 1990, and that in-service be provided for teachers and parents regarding the essence and subsequent implications of OSIS on them as well as on the students.

In conclusion, the Nipissing unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association feels Mr. Radwanski's report is tunnel-visioned and provides no peripheral view of individual student differences. Its philosophy seems to be that, from entry to graduation, there is only one road to success. This monolithic conceptualization—I have to apologize for that; that is a Kathy Souleism—ignores all provisions made by the Ministry of Education to address the individual needs of each unique student in Ontario. From the process of early and ongoing identification to the implementation of Bill 82, this report ignores the steps taken by the ministry and boards of education, as well as by our association, to develop and implement programs which meet the needs of our students. Given the serious lack of in-service education for teachers, it is unfair at this time to condemn OSIS as a failure.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mrs. Soule. I have to congratulate the Nipissing unit of OECSA for a very focused, succinct presentation in which you have certainly addressed the issues we are discussing today.

1510

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If I do not ask one obvious question, Mr. Reycraft will. I think I should first, and then he can get in at the supplementary stage to try to bash me with it. We received a brief from the federation which basically took a position in opposition to streaming, with certain major caveats about retraining teachers and proper resources, etc. It philosophically laid out a position opposed to it after an analysis of all the reports and studies it could find. Your local has come out with a different conclusion. I am asking if you are about to separate from the association.

Mr. Reycraft: I thought you were going to congratulate them.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Mr. Reycraft would like to congratulate you on your decision, but I wonder if you would like to make a comment on this matter.

Mrs. Soule: Certainly. First of all, I do not see that our positions are diametrically opposed. As an organization, we are certainly not now in a position to have received the provincial brief, as such, as policy. It has not gone through an annual general meeting and been adopted as provincial OECSA policy.

We tried to focus very much on the situation in North Bay, in Nipissing as we see it. Our one secondary school has been basically an advanced-level school, if you want to look at that in the context of an academically oriented school. In looking at this streaming situation, we feel we are dealing with a continuation of the ability grouping which we very strongly support in the elementary level, not a cutoff from elementary, not dealing in one way with students in elementary and another in secondary. That was the position we took when we wrote the report.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I presume you do not have a vocational wing of the school, in terms of that sort of separated streaming.

Mrs. Soule: Not as such at this point. The school is St. Joseph/Scollard Hall Secondary School. At the present time, they are undergoing a major renovation and there will be accommodation made for different levels. I am getting notes here. We do have a technological section at this point but we do not have the full shops, that sort of situation.

Madam Chairman: If Mrs. Stevens would like to elaborate on that at all, please feel free.

Mrs. Stevens: I think at this point what we are doing is looking at really a gross extension to St. Joseph/Scollard Hall, and there will definitely be a technological end to it. At this point in time we are dealing with some shops and some family studies courses, as well as drafting. However, there will be a more extensive elaboration on that kind of thing. There will be an electronic component and a small-engine component. That will be added with the grant we have just received from the government.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other major question I would ask—and this had not struck me about other presentations but when I think about it, it could possibly be said about a number of other presentations we received from teachers' groups. If you look at the end result of your recommendations, they basically all keep the

status quo, which is a fairly interesting general statement.

Therefore, I would ask if in this brief you are not suggesting major change or focusing, within the things we have touched, on problem areas. What are the problems that your local sees with the system? If they are not the structural things we are talking about, in terms of needing to change those things, what are they?

Mr. Keyes: In the matter of in-service training, I was hoping we might ask what impression the association made on the board, what was the impact in saying we do need some dollars towards in-service?

Mrs. Soule: Thank you for your supplementary, because that actually answers, in some part, Mr. Johnston's question.

We had an interesting time writing the brief because as we went through the report, it made us look very seriously at what is going on in our Nipissing separate schools, both at the elementary and the secondary levels. As we were doing that, we recognized that the areas that need addressing most strongly are the in-service areas of our teachers, specifically I believe, the secondary level; and certainly elementary school teachers need in-service.

The OSIS document is one which during my master's and principal studies and my provincial involvement in different committees, etc., I have had a lot to do with. As a document, I think much of it has been ignored. It has been the actual credits that have been addressed, not the philosophy behind it. I know the gentleman this morning had a box full of programs that were brought through, and there is the perspective; the teachers see this as a ministerial monster that brings to them all of these curriculum documents to be implemented.

Implementation is not an event, it is a process; and one which takes a great deal of in-service training. Teachers must learn to use this curriculum. They must address the differences between basic-level, general-level and advanced-level students, and we do not believe that has been addressed properly at the local level with the practitioners in the schools. I know that Carolyn has more to add to that.

Mrs. Stevens: I think it is the intention of the ministry to write the curriculum guidelines and it has put forth some very good curriculum guidelines in the very recent past. But the expectation is that they go from the ministry to the school board and there is an assumption there that the school boards are going to acknowledge receipt of those and provide the in-service to the

teachers who will then become the informed group. But in fact what happens is that, from the teacher's perspective, they see the ministry as a large monster writing all of these monumental reams of paper and sending them down to the boards which interpret them in a variety of different ways. There is a multitude of interpretations of the material that comes to them at that level.

Then it moves on to the principal, who is supposed to be the key teacher, and this is not always so. The fact of the matter is that the principals are not always the people who best in-service the teachers. So at the bottom end of the spectrum, the people who are meeting all of the students are confused, overwhelmed and barely coping in some situations. That is a sad statement on the state of affairs, but I think it is true.

Mrs. O'Neill: It is very hard for me to hear the term "ministry monster." The writing teams have been taken from your ranks, the ranks of the teachers of the province. Do you feel the north—

Mr. Reyecraft: It was not that way when I was there.

Mrs. O'Neill: That might be true. Do you feel the northern regions of the province, which I know are very different, have been represented on the writing teams?

Mrs. Soule: I will speak to that, if that is all right. In conceptualizing the ministry as a monster, we do not mean to say that there is no input from the ranks. We know there are people from North Bay who have been on provincial writing teams. That is not a major problem with it. It is what results from that.

The curriculum documents are good and I like the reference to ready-made curriculum. What has come down to our level are these documents, and no matter whose names appear on the little lists of writers—it is nice to see somebody from Nipissing, North Bay, Timiskaming or wherever it is; that is very good—but that is one person. What happens is that it comes to the board, and the board then is mandated to implement that curriculum within its schools. Then that goes to the principals.

The principals are supposedly going to have their teachers implement that curriculum in their classrooms. However, the process that ensues is not one where there is any in-service, where people with the expertise sit down with these teachers who are going to do it and spend the quality time necessary.

I heard someone jokingly refer to PD or PA days, and I am very familiar with the concern

there is provincially about the value of PD days or holidays or whatever you want to call them. I think the focus of these types of days or of this type of money should be on in-service in particular areas, dealing with particular grade levels or sections, subject areas if it is at the secondary level, and on in-service that does not mean a one-day shot: "Here is the document. This is how nice it is"; bringing somebody in from Toronto and saying: "Here it is. We have done this, this and this, and it follows these goals of education. Here you are. Go and teach it."

1520

In reality that is what happens, and I do not know that it is just in northern Ontario. I spend a great deal of time in southern Ontario, in Toronto, working with Ontario Institute for Studies in Education people, and I think that is a provincial problem. The reality is that our teachers who have been, more specifically, in the secondary schools for 25 years are getting the documents and are still using the same curriculum because they have not had the chance to learn the pedagogy behind it.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: How do you decide now what is done on PD days? Is there not input from the teachers at the school on what is going to happen on PD days?

Mrs. Soule: We are surveyed annually. As president, I am invited to sit on the calendar planning committee. The central office makes the major decisions. We plan one day as a federation. The consultant's office co-ordinators—Mrs. Stevens represents one area in special education—have been assigned to provide this service for the education, or whatever you want to call it, on those days.

I am not knocking them. I think that the days are good. There is no follow-up and there is no commitment by boards of education. It is probably due to lack of funds. If you are going to take teachers from a classroom for a week, pay for supply teachers for them and pay for the co-ordinator's time and energy, for the resources that would be necessary, and truly in-service those people, it takes a lot of money. That is the bottom line that we are given regularly, that there just are not funds available. That, I think, is an area that would correct many concerns in education.

Mrs. Stevens: I would like to speak to that for a moment. I think boards are notorious for not recognizing the need for professional development for the teachers. I think that having PA days as a one-shot deal is very nice. It is a break from

the classroom, and you certainly do get some input, but all it does is spark something. I think if there is no follow-up, it is a lost cause.

I would really like to see boards spending more professional development money that would relieve teachers from the classroom so that they can work with personnel who have some insight into the documents that the ministry is sending down, so that they can be updated on the level in which they are working. That, in our board, is the direction that we are taking now. Our in-service money, our PD money is being directed to relieve classroom teachers to work with co-ordinators, consultants or whomever.

I think implementation is a process and it is not an event. PD days to me are an event, and I do not think that is how curriculum is implemented. I really think it is an ongoing process.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. I think with all our supplementaries, we somewhat got away from the questioner there, but we are not going to allow Mr. Johnston to ask any more questions, anyway.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I was actually sure of that.

Mr. Keyes: Good decision.

Madam Chairman: That is why you quit.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There could be consensus on that.

Madam Chairman: We have four members left who have indicated that they have questions and we have five minutes left of our presenter's time so let's try to keep the questions as brief as possible.

Mr. Reycraft: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Mahoney: Did we not just hear from him?

Interjections.

Mr. Reycraft: I was going to say that I can remember the time when they were called neither PA nor PD days. I think when we had one day or two days a year, they were teachers' convention days.

Interjections.

Mr. Reycraft: Mr. Keyes was just trying to tell me that was back in 1948, but I know it was that way even more recently.

Mr. Keyes: I was there then as a student.

Mr. Mahoney: You have just killed three minutes.

Mr. Reycraft: This is not the justice committee.

Mrs. Stevens: We have a lot we would like to share with you; do not waste this time.

Mr. Reycraft: I listened to your answer to Mr. Johnston and, despite what you have said, I do think there is a bit of a contradiction between what you said about streaming and what the federation said to us when it was before us. I hope that when you have that conference to endorse or develop your approach that you will certainly try to convince them to change their position.

I want to pick up on a statement you have made about streaming. You say that you recognize the need to educate teachers on the value of courses at the basic and general levels, as well as on the dignity and self-esteem of students enrolled in those courses. It seems to me that statement addresses part of the problem we have about streaming. Is it your experience that students generally take advanced-level courses and take general or basic-level only when they are convinced by somebody that they are unable to take the advanced courses?

Mrs. Stevens: I think that used to be the case; I do not think that is the case any more. I will refer specifically to the learning-disabled population. We have a number of students in our school system these days who are learning disabled, but who are really quite intellectual and have the ability to function at high capacities.

I think formerly those students were recommended for the basic level because they could not read and write. That is no longer the case. I find now that informed teachers are being encouraged to have those students enrolled in advanced-level courses, and then we in the special education area are providing the support services to help those students in terms of resource rooms and special courses. In fact, even Nipissing University is addressing the learning-disabled population now by allowing them to take oral examinations and by having alternative note-taking strategies.

So I think I would disagree with you. I think there is room for improvement—there always is—but the issue is being addressed more and more. I think it is partially because of OSIS guidelines, because I think when guidance moved into the grades 7 and 8 level, teachers became more and more aware of some of the options and the opportunities that were available to students who may have had a deficit in one area or another, but not necessarily in all areas. In the past they may have looked at a child and said, "Low functioning, basic." I do not think that is the case any more. Maybe they will steer them to one basic course and the rest general or advanced.

Mr. Reycraft: Okay. Well then, I have to ask why in your brief you talk about the need to educate teachers on the value of those courses.

Mrs. Soule: I will address that. I think what Mrs. Stevens has alluded to is what we have been working for very strongly in Nipissing. That is a direction that our board has committed itself to, that Mrs. Stevens in her capacity as co-ordinator has spent a great deal of time with. I do not know that that is a provincial direction. Many of the teachers at the secondary level have, for many, many years, had the mindset of the academic student, the technical-level student and whatever the lowest qualification was. That is—

Mr. Reycraft: Academic snobbery, I think is the term used.

Mrs. Soule: I think that is probably it, and probably in Catholic secondary schools we have been basically academic. I think there is a contradiction in terms here, but that has been the direction.

It is difficult to deal with teachers who have not been schooled in the true meanings behind the terms "advanced," "general" and "basic" in dealing with these students. I know that in many schools advanced-level courses are still the sought-after courses. If you have a lot of seniority in the school, or whatever, then you get to teach the advanced-level students, and if you are on the Ontario academic courses you are there.

If you are stuck with a couple of general levels, and God help you, a basic-level class, then it is a big fear. They do not know how to relate to these students. They have not had the special education background that students who are currently going through faculties of education are given. Bill 82 did not exist when they were going through the faculties. They did not have to deal with that. They had one set of curriculum and they brought it out year after year after year, and it addressed the needs of those academic students. They were afraid of those kids who were down that other hall.

I think that has to be addressed. I do not think that they are poor educators. The need is for the ministry and boards to recognize that these people have to have their fears allayed, that these students have the potential to learn, that they have self-esteem and that teaching these students is not a comment on their ability to teach but rather on the fact that they can teach these students. There are resources there for them and there are resources for them to use. They have not learned that.

1530

Mr. Reycraft: I do not disagree with what you say about the attitude of secondary teachers, but what about the attitude of grade 8 teachers who advise these students on which options they should select in grade 9? Is the same thing not true there?

Mrs. Soule: I think we are both going to ask to speak to that. For the last four years, I have taught in the intermediate level. I teach core French, intermediate level. I do not know how many of you are familiar with that. That is probably one of the most difficult areas of education, because core French is mandated. All students have to take French, no matter what their ability. It is a mainstream that is an interesting subject area.

The experience I have had with the grades 7 and 8 teachers is that they also have that fear. They do not understand their mandate either. I am going to ask Mrs. Stevens to add to that, but I think, again, that it very much relates to it. OSIS has been seen as a secondary level document, and grade 7 and 8 teachers are not relating to it as part of what they are involved in. Now they are starting to, but it is a long process.

Mrs. Stevens: I think I would like to address it from the perspective of special education again and those students who have special needs. I think your students who are higher functioning will go into your advanced level, so I would like to address the others.

In all the schools—again, I am speaking only for our school system—we have resource teachers, at least one in every school. Those resource teachers now sit in on all the meetings with the students and the parents, if the parents wish to be there, in terms of choosing courses at the secondary level.

Our resource teachers are well-versed in the options that are available to some students at the secondary level. They are aware of what is available for learning-disabled students and for some of the other students who have special needs. It is our hope that, through our resource teachers, our grade 7 and 8 teachers will be much better informed and we are involved now in helping to make those choices.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Reycraft, perhaps we could go on, unless this is vital to your line of questioning.

Mr. Reycraft: It is on something that has not come up before and I will be very brief with the question.

When OSIS came in, the occupations program went out. Under the occupations program, only teachers with certification in special education could teach the students in those programs. Generally, the kids who are now in basic-level courses are the kids who used to be in the occupations program. Is that a shortcoming of the system?

Mrs. Stevens: No. I think it is a strength. Basic level is not a special education program. Basic level is a general education program that is catering to the needs of those students who have less ability, perhaps, in some areas than others. We have support personnel in all the schools who work with those teachers. Resource teachers work with teachers who are working with advanced-level, general-level and basic-level students. If there is additional support needed for basic-level teachers, it is there for them, but basic level in itself is not a special education component.

Mr. Reycraft: So in 1983, all those kids were special ed kids; and in 1984, zap, they were not.

Mrs. Stevens: Actually, zap, this year something magic has happened in our system. We have taken a real strong look at special education students, and we returned all of our intellectually delayed students, the former educable mentally retarded students, and our learning-disabled students, to their home schools this past September. That is a new turn in our system. They used to go off to their specialized schools and to their special classrooms. They may not have stayed in those classrooms all day long. They were integrated in the areas in which they could be integrated. However, they were not given the opportunities to socialize with their neighbourhood friends, stay for sports or any of those things. They were denied many of the normal kinds of things.

We have returned those students to their home schools and provided support service there. We now see the basic level and, really, all of the other levels that are catering to students with special needs at the secondary level as being an extension of that form of education. I am really very excited about that and I am working very hard to try to make it work. It is a challenge. We have only just walked into it and I am up to my ears in it, but I really think it is a move in the right direction. I see the basic level as an extension.

Mr. Reycraft: I appreciate your answer, but I have some difficulty with these students who are identified as being exceptional in grade 8 and, suddenly, when they enter the secondary system, are deemed to be no longer so.

Mrs. Stevens: That is not true. When they move to the secondary level, they continue to be exceptional. That has not changed. We do not have to reidentify students once they move into the secondary level. If a child is exceptional in grade 8, he continues to be. He continues with the same kinds of needs. His needs are defined; the resources are there; the program modifications are there; it is all written up. There is no definition of the two in our board.

Mrs. O'Neill: May I ask you if you have had the professional development, to get back to that subject, to support that rather exciting program.

Mrs. Stevens: We have had some professional development. It is ongoing. I am meeting with all of the resource teachers this week. We are just starting on monthly meetings. We are doing road shows, as I call them, in the schools. I really strongly feel that the in-service belongs to the classroom teachers, because they are the people who are in there trying to modify programs. We have running road shows on speech and language. We have running road shows in terms of gifted. We are doing the whole business. We are pretty busy, but we are trying to provide the support at the teacher level where we really feel there is a need.

Mr. Reyecraft: Thank you for your indulgence.

Madam Chairman: They all say that to me and then proceed on their merry way.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Oh, we mean it.

Mrs. Stevens: Madam Chairman, you told me you had control here.

Madam Chairman: No. I told you I was going to attempt to have control this afternoon, and it has not worked. I am giving up. We have Mrs. O'Neill, Mr. Furlong, and if we really want to add another half hour to our schedule, Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Furlong: In the interests of time, I will pass.

Madam Chairman: No. I would prefer that in the interests of time Mr. Mahoney passed. That would really save time. Mrs. O'Neill.

Mrs. O'Neill: My questions have been answered; thank you.

Mr. Furlong: I do not want to disappoint the delegation, so I will ask a question about the statement that the credit system encourages students to stay in school longer. I would like you to elaborate on that statement, and in so doing, I would also like you to consider a statement that was made this morning, that requiring students to

take 30 credits has the potential to increase the dropout rate. I am wondering if you could just comment generally on those two statements.

Mrs. Soule: Thank you for coming up with the question. I was expecting it. When I made that statement, that was in direct response to some of the areas Mr. Radwanski dealt with in his report. The credit system allows students to take courses at different levels, which in turn encourages them by their success.

I think that if there is one message that we would like the committee to get from our unit, it is that each student must be considered as an individual. All students' areas of expertise, their weak areas and their levels must be addressed.

In the credit system, these students are able to take advantage of programs such as co-op education, where they can get out into the work world and experience success there. They are able to feel good about what they are doing in math even though they are having difficulty in an area of language, in a writing area.

The science-oriented students or computer-oriented students can excel in those areas and can achieve success at an advanced level even though they may have a lot of difficulty with something as basic as spelling or speaking in a way where their thoughts can be transmitted in an advanced-level English class.

So we very strongly believe that this encourages students to be successful, not to be concentrating on areas of weakness, which seems to be the direction that the mainstream—the completely homogeneous concept Mr. Radwanski has proposed—would do.

The automatic remediation, remediation, remediation, summer school type of situation would, I think, be very detrimental to the self-esteem of a student who has areas of expertise and areas of weakness, which I think all of us have to recognize we have and which all of the students who are in our secondary schools have. That is our main point on that particular statement.

Mr. Furlong: Would you care to comment on the number of courses required, the statement this morning indicating that 30 was too many?

Mrs. Soule: The number of courses is not, as far as I am concerned, the essence of OSIS. I think that is 30 courses or 26 courses. I know our provincial document stated that there should be more flexibility in the number of courses required, that some students should be able to take 27, others 34 or whatever, and in those areas.

Mrs. Stevens, you may have something you want to add to that particular area of concern, but to be quite honest, it is not one that really concerns me. If it is 30, it is 30; if it is 26, it is 26. I think the implementation of the curriculum, the process the student goes through, is far more important than the number.

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Mrs. Stevens: I would like to comment a little further on that. I do not think 30 is the key factor here. With the credit system there is flexibility in terms of choice. If you have students who are fast-tracking or who are very capable—I seem to be continually talking about the student who is functioning at a lower level, but we do have students who are functioning at a very high level—I think it allows them to move through those as quickly as possible. Choice is a key factor here. With the credit system, there is a choice built in. I am not sure number is the key component. I do not think that is a critical issue at this point.

Mr. Mahoney: A very quick question: you said when dealing with social promotion that you consider it acceptable. I find it amazing to think that a school like Scollard Hall, which is the sister school to my alma mater, St. Jerome's, with the same priests and brothers working there, would consider social promotion acceptable. In fact, you seem to show some enthusiasm for it.

Mrs. Stevens: When we looked at social promotion, we did not just look at it at the secondary level; we looked at it all the way through. Maybe I can be more specific here and take a case in point. I have a young lady who now is 13 years old who is very physically developed, functioning approximately at a grade 2 level, suffering from severe family background. Really, she should be placed in a grade 2 classroom according to the Radwanski report and be kept there until she gets her grades up through summer school or whatever. It is not feasible. This girl is as tall as I am. She is very well developed. She needs some social skills. She is going to be placed in a high school environment within a year or two, so you cannot have her in a grade 2 classroom. Social promotion in that case is a very necessary thing.

I am also very proud to say that at your sister school we have the intellectually handicapped class, the Vista class, and I think it is very important that those students are seen to progress to a certain level. Certainly, they do not have the acquisition of skills the advanced-level, general-level or even basic-level kids have, but it is important to their self-esteem. They are being

trained ultimately to function as individuals within society and it is important for them to be seen as progressing, for their own sake.

Mr. Mahoney: But you are referring really to special-ed programs and extreme examples. I got the impression in your opening statement that the concept of social promotion was something you saw as acceptable generally across the board and something which should be encouraged.

Mrs. Stevens: I think when you talk about social promotion you are talking about exceptional students to some degree, because if a student is functioning at the academic level or whatever level and progressing, there is no need for the issue even to come up. I think we have to consider the child's potential. I think we have to consider the age. I think there are a lot of factors you have to consider. I do not think that every child should automatically just move on to the next grade every year. I think it is something that has to be seriously considered on an individual basis, but there is room for it in some situations.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank both Kathy and Carolyn for a very stimulating presentation. Kathy mentioned that there was a specific message she hoped we would take back. I think we have taken a number of messages and we thank you for that.

Mrs. Soule: Thank you very much.

Mr. Mahoney: It sounds like a fun place to work.

Mrs. Soule: We are looking for new employees. We are hiring in special ed.

Mr. Mahoney: I have three years. I have a good job.

Madam Chairman: It is called temporary job security for three years.

Our next presentation will be by the Ontario Society for Autistic Citizens. Perhaps you would come forward, please. I think we will just wait one moment till members are seated again and then we will begin. Please make yourselves comfortable while we are waiting and I will also give you a brief rundown of the procedure. We have allocated 30 minutes for the presentation and that includes time for questions, we hope. If you would just start by identifying yourself for purposes of electronic Hansard.

I was about to say that members are now seated, but I think they have gone for coffee. Please proceed whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR AUTISTIC CITIZENS, SUDBURY CHAPTER

Mr. Ketter: My name is Charles Ketter. I am here this afternoon to represent the Sudbury

chapter of the Ontario Society for Autistic Children. Prior to making our presentation, I would like to introduce myself because there were so few of us working on this, I have to admit that I have a heavy influence in this and it might be necessary that you are aware of my own background to appreciate some of it.

I am a parent of a 22-year-old autistic boy, who unfortunately has not been able to live at home for the last 10 years. I am also an elementary school teacher. I enjoyed the last presentation, with some trepidation. I have a degree in psychology and I also have a special education specialist certificate. I am a regular classroom teacher and I have taught special ed. Some of the remarks in this presentation draw on all those roles I have played over the years. I am also a parent advocate for a couple of families here in the area that are presently trying to access services that this ministry is responsible for; that is, the education of children here in this area.

With that, I would like to go to the presentation I put before you.

We wish to express our appreciation to the select committee for this opportunity to provide our personal input into what will evolve into positive construction of both the philosophy and practice of the Ministry of Education in the coming years. I may stray from the printed document, I am not a reader.

As members of a provincial society, we are aware that your committee received a presentation by the Alliance for Children back in July; at least that was the information we were provided with. We concur with all of their recommendations. However, we believe that in the north we bring a special flavour or a different flavour to many of these recommendations. We thank you for our opportunity to bring your attention to these recommendations.

We too, like them, assume that "members of the select committee recognize and accept that each child is unique, with unique learning needs and with individual rights guaranteed by federal and provincial legislation." However, this assumption also carries with it the frustration that what is accepted is frequently ignored. That is to say that the uniqueness of children is accepted. We all accept it to the point of ignoring it.

While children with special needs are children first and exceptional second, in this political arena parents and their children have been confronted by the shallowness of this rhetoric. Despite the passage of Bill 82, amending the Education Act to enrich the guarantees of rights for our children in the educational system of this

province, it has generally been through the aggressive efforts of parents and their advocates that change of any kind has occurred. As the majority of the population resides in southern Ontario, so does the strength of change. Hence, such change seeps more slowly through these northern parts of our province.

The system has been traditionally viewed as the dominant structure in these areas. Here in the north, school boards still have a degree of respect from the electorate out there. Coupled with the smaller number of parents, who are less frequently and/or strongly organized, inroads of change are difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Our present chapter managed to come to be, after 12 years, just this spring. It is a collection of some 23 member families, representing some 17 children. None of us knew one another existed in this region.

Far too often we parents, particularly those of us with family members in the lower incidence syndromes, such as autism, find our children being used as political pawns in the struggles between the various ministries that bear responsibility for differing children's services. Had I wished, I could have brought last night's meeting to this table to make the point we are trying to make here.

A boy has not been in school since October 1987, while ministries continue to lobby with one another as to who is going to serve this boy's needs. We are talking about educational needs. We are repeatedly reminded that the Ministry of Community and Social Services remains as the major umbrella for servicing the special needs of children, but we are painfully aware of the interministerial posturing that occurs when one attempts to access needed services.

Many of our children are compromised through the programs we are forced to accept. Though Bill 82 has provided the mechanisms to properly identify the needs and resources appropriate to have our children "develop as completely as possible in the direction of his or her talents and needs," this right is being suppressed or seriously compromised in efforts to make the child fit the program.

Repeatedly, children with special needs are identified using present programs as the terms of reference for expressing his or her needs. They are not being treated individually, but rather like a square peg that will be shaved down to fit the round hole, thus crushing their spirit and ability to become functioning, contributing members within the community.

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Frequently, the only advocates a child has may be his parents. Their personal knowledge and abilities to advocate are related to their personal circumstances and the resources available to them within the community. In northern Ontario, distance and population influence the availability of these resources. The personal support that comes from one's own associations is diminished by numbers and distance.

Together with these factors is the often encountered reluctance of the system to work with the parents. Unfortunately, frequently an adversarial circumstance continues to exist. This contributes to our children facing extended periods of time with inappropriate services, as educational officials attempt to avoid the confrontation they anticipate as a result of their inflexibility or unwillingness to develop precedents in programming.

The ability of the parents to advocate for their child is related to the educational outcome of the child. What I can do for my own child is what my child is going to be able to achieve in the educational system of this province.

The parents are most committed to their child and have gained specific knowledge, expertise and skills in the many roles they fulfil for their child. As a result, it is most presumptuous of the educators and other service providers to assume a dominant posture.

Every effort must be put forth to include the parents in a co-operative consultative role. Through mutual understanding and respect, positive interaction should be achievable. It is through such interaction that the needs and best interests of the child shall be most positively served.

To this point, we would recommend that the main goal of education must be to enable every citizen to become a fully functional participant of the community within society. We further recommend that the Minister of Education undertake to mandate an ombudsman-like advocate to provide for assistance and/or intercession at the earliest possible level of expressed concern for a child's education. To wit, we have children whose parents have been working for two years to get an IPRC.

A full, equal role in education must be provided to parents. We are partners with those classroom people and with the administrators.

A parents' guide using clear, concise language, listing the basic rights of a parent and/or child and the basic procedures to be used in determining special needs—that is, the IPRC—

should be developed and distributed by the ministry through the schools and other agencies.

While this recommendation would still not guarantee that all parents would become aware of how they might address concerns about their child's education, it would serve to provide direction for the local boards in the development of their own parents' guide to special education. It would also help clarify some of the ambiguity that is present in some of these guides now being issued by various boards.

Statements such as "Provide programs within budgetary limits" would then receive the scrutiny deserved. Such statements as this and others that suggest board responsibility ends with doing "what we consider educationally appropriate with the resources we have available," are ambiguous enough to leave most parents believing that there is "nothing more that can be done."

We respectfully suggest that in their desire to satisfy their perception of trustee expectations, some administrators have been as vague about the board's responsibilities as they have been towards parental and student rights.

While appearing very negative, this situation only directs attention to the reality of function at each level in the system. Teachers fail to speak up and challenge what they perceive as weaknesses or failures of the system out of loyalty to or fear of their administrative structure.

Principals, the head teachers in schools, function under the same stresses and the additional stress of upward mobility and circumstance acceptance of system-directed compromises. As long as they can put out the bush fire, they are not worried about the forest, and they will respond in that manner. Each stage in the system has its stress, which often becomes the focus, as the child, with his or her family, becomes forgotten. The them-us syndrome has yet to be diminished in most northern areas, despite the present mandates of the clauses known as Bill 82 being facts in law.

Even if parents are presented with a clear and concise identification for their child, many have little knowledge of the resources that may exist in their community. As there are many identifiable children whose symptomology is much less pronounced than others, it will fall to the educational officials to provide an initial identification. Other families confront initial medical diagnoses without any support or information. Such diagnoses are often brought, in bewilderment, to the attention of educational officials. As a result, many families are left to fend for themselves in seeking further services and/or

information for their children. In a previous year, responsibility for such rested in the mandate of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The placement of this role with that ministry has further confused the service seekers. Most parents view the growth and development of their children into participatory citizens as occurring within the area of education. This leads to the majority of parents addressing needs for such services to their local educational officials generally, the first being their child's classroom teacher.

We recommend that the Ministry of Education undertake to direct and fund local school boards to prepare a directory of local services and resources available in their community or region, with clear and concise descriptions of their roles and mandates. The local Ministry of Community and Social Services, the local children's service agencies and others can provide me with this, but I do not go to them. As a parent, I am talking to the educational officials, and they cannot provide this information to me unless I have someone who is working overtime in the educational field in the sense of reaching out to the other ministries to bring them in.

Further, that the Ministry of Education be empowered to gather and make available to all boards a directory of services in all regions of the province to provide the boards and parents with the information necessary to seek or model programs more appropriate to meeting the needs of their children.

Ten years ago, I worked through children's aid, the ministries of Community and Social Services, Education, Health and God knows how many others, and no two of them spoke to me about the same services, yet I was seeking one particular type of service for my child. There was no central agency. I continued to go back to the Ministry of Education, hoping that it would have that information, because I was seeking educational placement for my child. It could not provide that information to me.

Further, that the Ministry of Education be directed to maintain as current as realistically possible an updated provincial directory;

That the ministry direct each local board to update its local directory on an annual basis;

Further, that the local boards, through the individual schools in their jurisdictions, be mandated to provide a copy of this local directory to the child's parents when an identification is made or becomes apparent by the local school, and that a copy of the provincial directory be made available upon request or at any time

deemed appropriate by a classroom teacher or other official.

As a classroom teacher, I am sometimes amazed at the information I am not permitted to pass on to parents, who have a right to have that information.

Such steps will go a long way to develop a more participatory partnership between the educational system and the parents of each child. Informed parents are less likely to suffer as acutely from the anxiety generated by ignorance and, hence, be a little more co-operative.

The co-operative, open sharing of information, a conscious effort on the part of the local system to accept its role in the development of the child, rather than forcing the child into the expectations of the system, should enhance the relationships of all parties to the planning and delivery of appropriate enriching programs. This openness will contribute to reducing the frustrations of the child and family. This will reduce the need for appeals, tribunals and the animosity in the process of providing necessary, appropriate programs.

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With this in mind, we recommend that the identification and placement review committee process must be maintained to ensure the child's program meets his or her needs. The participation and involvement of parents in the education of their children should be ensured through the strengthening of the IPRC process. Too often parents are informed a week after an IPRC meeting that it took place, because they thought it was simply a parents' meeting and they did not attend. Decisions are being made by the administration without input from parents. No one is intentionally misleading anyone; we are just not involving everyone.

"Program" should be included in the process known as the IPRC so that it becomes the identification, placement, program and review committee process.

Further, "program" should be clearly defined as appealable.

Further, a process to ensure open, further communications between all education levels, officials, parents and, where appropriate, students, must be mandated.

We are presently trying to establish this program for this boy, as I suggested. The holdup is not program. The board, through its administration, is prepared to provide the program. The holdup is placement. The placement it seeks is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. It does not have the

authority or the ability to access that placement in the sense that placement is the four walls within which they are going to work in a specialized setting. The program is there, but the placement is not. We cannot appeal the program; we can only appeal the placement.

All areas of the province must hold and have access to all resources necessary to ensure that teachers, parents and others have the support to make programs viable.

We recommend that the Ministry of Education undertake to ensure that appropriate and ongoing training is available and provided to all teachers who have or may have exceptional pupils placed in their care, even on a temporary basis.

This draws us back to the last presentation. I bring your attention to the fact that the ladies were addressing the need for use of professional activity and follow-up to professional activity or professional development days. The high cost of providing this prevents the follow-up that is necessary. We suggest that the ministry must take its leadership role in seeing that the training takes place and, if necessary, providing the training.

Further, we recommend that the ministry provide a mechanism for evaluating program demands at the classroom level to ensure that appropriate service delivery is available without excessive demands on the personnel responsible for delivering. I am sure you have heard a number of horror stories—structures in classrooms; 25, 30, 35 students; anywhere from one to Lord knows how many identified exceptional children still being placed in that room. There have been circumstances where classrooms have included two visually-impaired, two hearing-impaired, trainable mentally retarded and learning-disabled students all in the same shelter.

There is no teacher, no matter how magical, no matter how strong, no matter how well trained, who can cope with a circumstance like that in the classroom without appropriate supports. Those supports would necessitate the infusion of other teachers or teachers' aides, but nobody is there to evaluate that program. The teachers cope with the situation and provide what service they can. In short, they shuffle the deck until they can pass the hand on.

Such acts do not deny the autonomy of the local boards but do, in small measure, make them more accountable for their decisions in the field of special education.

Even prior to the institution of Bill 82, the funding of necessary programs created considerable controversy and still does. I served for five

years on a special education advisory committee. Every meeting had comments regarding the inability to deliver program, or "We can't consider this, because we don't have money."

The general public's perception of costs has developed from many unsupported statements on the part of local trustees. Many trustees and the general public are afraid of the cost of special education, although they have little support for many of the statements they make. Most boards have the knowledge of its smallest cost. Few have made efficient examination of true costs and income from any of their special programs. More unfortunate, few are even aware of the additional benefits within their local system as a result of the inclusion of many special education programs.

Still with this discourse on funding, one is forced to examine the role of the Ministry of Education in guaranteeing a board's financial integrity with the high costs, particularly in startup, of many programs. While the mandates of Bill 82 are most welcome, the realities of cost must be confronted. The minimal tax base and the already excessive taxation of home owners limits the financial potential of some boards, particularly in this mid-north region.

It has never been the intention of any of those of us with exceptional children to diminish or undermine any positive programs for children. While mandating services for the exceptional, the ministry has failed to ensure the integrity of programming for all students. This has led to the deletion or minimization of programs for all students. Though there may be some argument that local boards have been excessive in the past, such has not been the case, or possibly even, prior to the institution of Bill 82.

As a result, we would recommend that the ministry undertake a study of real cost associated with the provision of special education programs in a selection of exemplary boards throughout the province and that the ministry undertake to provide support funding based on co-operatively developed guidelines.

Among the many positive mandates of the legislation referred to as Bill 82 which we still have to address is that of the special education advisory committee. Though the legislation ensures representation of various agencies or associations on the committee, it has limited representation in some areas. It calls for 12 representatives; in some areas, there is no input provided for any of those associations beyond the 12 which are members of the committee.

As well, there is the unwillingness of most boards to advertise times and dates of meetings.

There are even those who have taken the unstated position that these meetings are not open to the public, nor are they, in reality.

While it is true that the active effective membership of the various associations on this committee relates very strongly to its integrity as a meaningful structure, it is equally true that the individual representatives' perception of acceptable behaviour on the committee taints their participation. Most association representatives are keenly aware of their roles as appointees versus that of the elected trustee and the employed supervisory officers. Hence, SEACs of our northern areas are generally dominated by board personnel and/or the trustees, though this is not true in all cases and I speak to that personally: I know the SEAC I served on is not dominated by those people because association members took very active roles.

But the fact that this is a perception indicates a need to more fully ensure SEAC's function as a positive and co-operative element in the structure of the local school system's special education programs.

We recommend that the Ministry of Education undertake to ensure that all members of SEACs are made aware of their value through symposiums and other informational processes; further, that the Ministry of Education undertake to establish some form of periodical communication to be distributed province-wide to any member of a SEAC, with copies to all registered local and/or provincial associations.

In closing, we would like to address the area that most concerns us. We speak now to accountability. If only one issue is addressed by the select committee on education, we submit that this must be the one which receives that distinction. We speak of accountability at all levels of the system, beginning with the Ministry of Education down to the classroom.

Everyone who has a part in or a responsibility for the growth and development of the child must be accountable for his or her role. If each party fulfils the mandate and responsibilities appropriately while communicating with all the others, all children will benefit and achieve their rightful place in the society of their community.

The Ministry of Education must develop the co-operation and resources to ensure that teacher training is such that it properly prepares and updates the training of teachers responsible for the diverse needs of exceptional children. It must co-operate with and develop programs in addition to and conjunctively with those available through other ministries.

In addition, these same officials must clarify and redevelop some areas of the legislation, such as in the identification and placement review committee process.

Just before moving from that point, coming back once more, one aspect struck the parents I was advocating with last night as very strange. We have gone through an appeal process here locally, just to bring you into the IPRC process, and this was the second stage. The child was IPRCed; we appealed; the appeal board made a ruling. That ruling came forward. It has been juggled; it has been mishandled; time lines and everything else have been totally ignored, but it was brought forward because everybody was hoping to move forward in a co-operative spirit.

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Last night we were informed that in order to proceed to tribunal, the board can outright reject the appeal board's decision. They do not have to appeal the appeal board's decision; they can just reject it. But the parents must appeal the appeal board's decision if they are not satisfied with the conditions. In our circumstance we were satisfied with the appeal board's ruling. The board rejected it out of hand. That puts the parents now in the position of having to advocate for a tribunal. They again must do the advocating. They again must go out and get the service for the local board of education rather than the board of education going out and getting the service for them.

The Ministry of Education must establish procedures which ensure that appropriate service delivery occurs and that noncompliance with legislation is seriously consequenced and compliance is reinforced through assistorial plans and programs. If we are going to slap them for not following the rules, let's help them out when they do follow the rules and that assistance is necessary.

School boards must be encouraged and assisted in complying with all legislation and regulations which provide for and protect the rights of each child and his or her parents. School boards must be made abundantly aware, through serious consequencing, of need to comply with these mandates and regulations. School boards must return their focus to the purpose of their existence: the child.

School boards must be encouraged to establish frank relations and communications in order to achieve open frank dialogue of evaluation of programming. It is essential to appropriate programming that all participators be assured of open, positive dialogue for development and

improvement of programs without the thought or fear of retribution. Boards must be encouraged to establish and/or improve the roles of their various advisory committees to provide for open and frank evaluative communication.

Teaching staffs must be provided with the resources and supports to properly provide appropriate programs, so that initial and ongoing training is defined and participated in under mandate by those teachers with exceptional pupils.

Teachers must become more aware of their responsibility to the final decision and delivery pertaining to program. They must be made aware that the consequencing of failure to provide appropriate programs may begin with them but it reaches beyond. They must be made to understand the advocate role into which their position places them. They must have mandated protection to proceed for the child.

As a teacher, I am mandated to report any suggested abuse of a child in my class or school. I am protected by legislation in doing that but, as a teacher, if I am dissatisfied, if I know that the program is inappropriate for the child, I do not have any sort of protection to carry forth my advocate role of ensuring, with the co-operation of those parents, that that child gets the service he or she needs. I am an employee of the board to whom I would have to advocate. Something has to be put in place to make it possible in such a conflict-of-interest circumstance for me as a teacher to still be able to address what I see as the failings of my own system to provide an appropriate program for the child.

With these thoughts, we venture to repeat the final and most significant recommendation put forward to this select committee on July 27, 1988, by the Alliance For Children that: "The Ministry of Education should ensure accountability at all levels of the system: the classroom, the school, the board and the ministry. This accountability must have the child as the focus."

The Sudbury chapter of the Ontario Society for Autistic Citizens appreciates this opportunity. We close with the hope that this effort at communicating some of our concerns and frustrations will contribute to positive developments in your later deliberations and recommendations.

We expect that you will put to rest any suggestions, such as those that were made to a parent by an administrator as recently as two months ago, that Bill 82 is obsolete. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Ketter, for your very comprehensive brief. While it did not precisely focus on the specific topics we are addressing, there were still a number of issues which you have raised which have been raised by previous delegates, some of them by the alliance, but also by others.

I think we have had three parent representatives who have asked for an ombudsman, for instance. From your brief, I was not sure whether you were talking about an ombudsman just for the exceptional children in the IPRC process, or if you were saying generally across the school system that there should be an ombudsman. I wonder if you could clarify that for me.

Mr. Ketter: I do not mind at all. The Ministry of Community and Social Services has an ombudsman-like figure in the person of Les Horne, whom I can approach as a parent. As I understand it, he has some jurisdiction or some mandated responsibility for any programming within the Ministry of Community and Social Services. That is the type of ombudsman we are suggesting the ministry consider, a ministry ombudsman, someone who could intervene at any particular level in any regard to education; not beyond the responsibilities of education, just in education.

Madam Chairman: The other comment you made was with reference to a parent who found out the week after that the meeting he had missed and just thought was a parents' meeting was actually an IPRC and his child's future was decided upon.

I do not know about the board in Sudbury, but I know the way they run it in Toronto. When they send out the forms for the IPRC they explain quite extensively to the parent what is happening. Then you have to sign a consent form. You have three options: you tell them to go ahead without you for the IPRC; you plan to be there but, if you cannot, to go ahead without you; or the third option is unequivocally, "If I am not there, this is not to proceed."

The steps are outlined for the parents. I think this might certainly assist in that regard; it is really brought to the attention of parents that this is important. They have to sign this release and without it the meeting cannot go ahead. I do not know if that has anything to do with local practice or not.

Mr. Ketter: Local practice generally is that there is communication open. I have dealt with the North York board because my boy was placed in Maple, at Kerry's Place, some years ago. Yes, I received all the due notification. I know that it

does occur here as well, but many times, many boards—it is nice of us to each pick up our own individual board that we are very familiar with and all documentation is provided to us—but there are still boards in the province, schools, sometimes with the consent of the principal who becomes a kingdom unto himself sort of thing, where we have parents who are receiving a document, “Notice of a meeting,” not clearly identifying what the intent of the meeting is. The parents are, therefore, because of job commitments and everything else, thinking: “This is another parent interview at the school, and I have been through a whole group of those already. I cannot afford to lose any more pay, so I won’t go.”

Then they become aware that it was an IPRC because the mandated document of consent comes home for them to sign. They become aware of the whole process, but by that stage they are—again, we are dealing with an ignorance of process, parents who are unaware of their rights, and these rights are not being clearly defined to them. That is our recommendation.

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Madam Chairman: Certainly the information booklet you have outlined would be very helpful in that regard.

Time is limited, so perhaps we can move on. In fact, I think you have actually used up all your time for the presentation, but I know Mrs. O'Neill and I think Mr. Johnston both had questions.

Mrs. O'Neill: I wonder, sir, if you are aware of the provincial association of the special education advisory committee group.

Mr. Ketter: Yes, I am.

Mrs. O'Neill: Do you feel that is not serving all the needs? You seem to have outlined some things in here that I felt were being attended to by that provincial association.

Mr. Ketter: They are now being attended to by that association. They are not perfect as yet. We hope that they will continue to grow and improve.

Mrs. O'Neill: Both of my next two questions are specific questions, but I do not want you to name names or even identify areas.

Mr. Ketter: I certainly would not.

Mrs. O'Neill: I would like you to tell me, when you say that people have been waiting for two years for an IPRC, are there special circumstances? Is there a communication problem? What is the difficulty regarding obtaining an IPRC in some areas that you seem to know of?

Mr. Ketter: I would suggest it is, first of all, ignorance on the part of a parent as to what his rights are to demand that IPRC and it is the system itself that is then making use of that ignorance to proceed in hopes of providing a co-operative program without having to go into the legalities of identifying an exceptionality, and therefore into the process of definitely providing a program.

Mrs. O'Neill: What do you mean by “providing co-operative program”? You do not mean co-operative education; you must mean something else.

Mr. Ketter: No, co-operating with the parents in providing the necessary program for the child.

Mrs. O'Neill: You may certainly decline to answer this. You did make a statement that, as a teacher, you have been and are conscious of information you cannot pass on to parents. Could you state in a general way what kinds of information that would be?

Mr. Ketter: I would suggest there are systems, I do not say mine, but I do know there have been discussions with me in regard to the fact that certain processes, certain parent process rights—that is, to follow the IPRC through, it is suggested that you hand them the booklet and let them read for themselves. The booklet in itself is ambiguous as to the process to follow, and the parents seek clarification. As I say, it has been suggested that that clarification should not be provided; that that is somebody else’s job. Refer them to the principal; refer them to the consultant.

Mrs. O'Neill: Do you feel the provincial SEAC association will be helpful in preparation of the provincial booklet you were talking to? As I understand it, that is one of their goals.

Mr. Ketter: I would hope so. I certainly see them as serving a positive function there.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I will ask my primary questions, but there are a couple of comments I want to make. I think it is very important that you made this kind of presentation in that it will also be a nice preparation for you when you start to respond to the Bill 82 changes that will hopefully come down this fall and that either this committee or the standing committee on social development I have no doubt will be dealing with in public hearings. So I think it is nice to be able to put your documents together in that way.

I just say that it is important to remember Les Horne’s role is that of an advocate rather than an ombudsman. He has no powers, in the sense of legislative powers, and his job grew out of the

interministerial hard-to-serve committee, which has a very direct link to the kinds of things you were talking about in terms of the interministerial problems with kids who are—well, autistic kids especially.

If members think this kind of case of ministerial conflict is rare, I would let them know that, just the other day, I learned of a case of four developmentally handicapped kids who were sitting in a group home, not attending school for the last month and with no indication when they would go to school, because the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services could not tell what was an educative responsibility and what was a social services responsibility when it came to matters like toilet training and other things. I think that is just a horrendous situation. Somebody in a position to ginger that along, I agree, would be a very useful kind of mechanism somewhere within the ministries.

Mr. Reycraft: I am sure you offered your services.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have, of course.

The other thing I would say that you have hit on really well—and again, for members who are not that aware of what the IPRC process is, I think there is a real case for saying that there is not due process as guaranteed under the charter within that system of appeals. Having gone through your regional appeal at this point and, as you say, now having to pursue the appeal with all the powers in the control of the board, it really becomes a question of whether it is even worth while to pursue it to the tribunal level, if you look at the number of cases where in fact that has been of any use when the boards have been recalcitrant. It is a very tough process at the moment, which hopefully will be overturned.

The role of the teacher as advocate, I think, is an interesting one. I found interesting your comments around the liability questions. Whereas you have an obligation under the law to report child abuse or in fact a child in need of protection in general, you do not have any protection if you were to say that there is something very seriously wrong with a placement that has been made for a child in the system. I think that is a very interesting conundrum for teachers.

I do not know if there are people more experienced within the education system to speak to, whether or not there is any possibility of a change of framework there, but it seems to me that child is sometimes as much in need of protection from a bad decision around his educational process as he might be if he were

improperly diagnosed and put into a residential setting of some sort. Therefore, it would be interesting to see if that kind of principle might be extended to give some obligation to report, as well as some protection.

Those are just comments I wanted to make. The question I wanted to ask was asked well by Mrs. O'Neill.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Ketter, for your presentation today and for making us aware of some of the further issues on IPRCs and exceptional and autistic children that need to come to our attention.

Our next presentation will be by the Voice for Hearing Impaired Children. I believe it is the North Bay chapter. Please come forward. Welcome to our committee.

Mrs. Valiquette: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Welcome back. We had a presentation with Mrs. Valiquette in attendance yesterday in Ottawa. It is nice to see her again.

I was looking through your brief and I noticed there are a number of similarities to the brief that we had in Ottawa. If, in the interest of time, you would highlight the areas in which there is significant difference between your brief and that of the Ottawa chapter, that would be very helpful.

VOICE FOR HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN, NORTH BAY CHAPTER

Mrs. Valiquette: Actually, we are basically here to answer questions, because we realize that on a lot of the material was covered yesterday in Ottawa there was no time for questions, so we would like to make a large part of this time simply answering questions.

First of all, my name is Michelle Valiquette. This is my husband, John. We are parents of three daughters, two of whom are hearing impaired. On my right is John Stephens. He has a hearing-impaired daughter as well. Before I start, the member for Nipissing (Mr. Harris) sends his regards to all of you.

Mr. Keyes: Likewise, we send them back to him.

Mrs. Valiquette: Okay. He wants a copy of this, anyway.

What we would like to do is simply go through some of the introduction to highlight some things. As I mentioned, we would really like to answer any questions that you might have about this presentation.

We believe, of course, that all hearing-impaired children must be given every opportu-

nity to grow and learn. We feel it is not right to place limitations on a child's future before he or she has had the chance to learn and listen. We believe very strongly in the auditory-verbal approach. As a parent-centred approach, it is very important to realize that parents are a vital part of this approach. Sometimes that is difficult for educators to accept. We have worked with our children since the moment of diagnosis and we want to be involved in the educational process.

It is an evolving process. It does not end when a child enters school and it does not end when a child comes home from school. You are always teaching. You are always teaching new concepts and new vocabulary. You try to incorporate every situation into a learning experience for your child.

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Fewer than 200 children are in the regular auditory-verbal therapy program, and this is unfortunate. The only services right now which our children receive in terms of parent therapy is through Voice for Hearing Impaired Children, which is a parent organization. Catherine McEnroe is the itinerant teacher of the hearing-impaired, and she comes once a month to North Bay to work with our children but mainly to work with us as parents, to help us as parents of deaf children learn how to teach our hearing-impaired children to speak better and to listen better.

Before we had Catherine, I personally travelled to Toronto from North Bay every second Thursday, down and back in one day, with a 15-month-old for a one-hour therapy that was not available in North Bay. I was at the same time, for a short period of time, receiving help from the Sir James Whitney School, which is the residential school. They offer a preschool program. However, their focus is total communication.

Does everybody understand the difference between total communication and auditory-verbal therapy? No? Total communication is an option that parents choose to teach their deaf children, which incorporates sign language, usually signed exact English, which follows the English language.

The auditory-verbal approach has no sign language in it. We concentrate on the listening. The auditory-verbal approach incorporates three very important things. One is early identification, the earlier the better. Our youngest daughter, Sarah Jane, is three years old now, and she is the earliest ever to be fitted with hearing aids at the Hospital for Sick Children. She was three weeks old when she got her hearing aids. Early

identification is vital. Second is amplification—hearing aids and learning how to use the hearing aids. The third one is intensive training, and this is what we are here for. This is what we would like to make you realize, that it is very important that this intensive training begin from the moment of diagnosis, not at two or one years of age but at three weeks or whatever age the child is diagnosed.

I would just like to go through the brief, the presentation, very quickly. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them at any time. Is that okay? These are our principles for quality education:

First, parents must have choices. We are here as advocates of the auditory-verbal approach, but we feel all parents should be made aware of all the approaches they should have access to and then they can make their decision an informed decision.

An audiologist, as well, should have exposure to all methods of teaching hearing-impaired children. We were very fortunate in North Bay. We have one audiologist, and she is very much for the auditory-verbal approach. She continually encourages us in our approach, and they are usually the first people advising parents. You are so vulnerable at the time of diagnosis when you are told your child is deaf or hearing-impaired or whatever. You are so vulnerable. You want to grab at whatever is available immediately. It is very important that everyone concerned is aware of the approaches.

Second, each child's needs are unique. That is basic.

Third, children should be educated in their own community. We really feel that the day of sending children to a residential school is past, unless—I do not know what reason you would have to do that. The problems which have occurred as a result of children being sent away from northern communities are many. We feel it is vital that our children be educated at home with their families as part of their community. It is good for the hearing-impaired children; it is also good for the rest of the family and the rest of the community.

Support systems must be continually refined. We are satisfied with things as they stand, but they must be continually evaluated and changed according to the child's different needs.

Before we go on, are there any questions?

Madam Chairman: Perhaps it might be better if we waited until you finished your entire presentation.

Mrs. Valiquette: That is fine.

We are on to the concerns and recommendations.

Generally speaking, auditory-verbal therapy is available as an option in a very limited number of communities. Again, as I mentioned to you, I had to travel to Toronto. John and I travelled to Toronto together—

Madam Chairman: When I was looking over the list of today as compared to the one in Ottawa, I found that most of them were very similar, other than that you had a few, for instance concern 3, in which you gave a specific example of North Bay. If you could just highlight the ones which members have not had access to, that would be appreciated.

Mrs. Valiquette: Okay. The “in lieu of” funding is what you are concerned about?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Madam Chairman, Mr. Reycraft has just raised a very good point. Three of the members were not in Ottawa yesterday, and maybe we should not—

Madam Chairman: Then, in that case—

Mrs. Valiquette: Shall I continue back then?

Madam Chairman: Have the members read the brief? If they have not, perhaps you could briefly go through the concerns and recommendations.

Mr. Keyes: I have read them all thoroughly.

Madam Chairman: If you would proceed, then, with concerns 3 and 4; I think they are the two—

Mrs. Valiquette: Concern 3 incorporates the “in lieu of” funding. The services we have available in North Bay at the time are as a result of Bill 82 and memorandum 76C. Unfortunately, although I understand initially why they had to tie these criteria into the “in lieu of” funding, we find that a lot of the criteria the school board has to meet are no longer pertinent or relevant to the situation we now have in North Bay.

Just to give you a brief rundown, the children all have to be in one school. They have to be a homogeneous group. It is very difficult to find a homogeneous group of hearing-impaired children in northern Ontario. We found that out. The children have to be with a teacher of the hearing-impaired 50 per cent of the time. When we have had visits from the Sir James Whitney School and the ministry schools, some schools have actually had to take the children out from where they are and put them in a classroom and say, “Okay, you have to pretend you are here 50 per cent of the time.”

In some towns further north, we know children have actually been removed from one school and put in another school on the day the ministry visits. We do not feel we should have to do that any more. We feel in terms of memo 76C that we need more autonomy; we do not feel the program should be tied to these criteria. In North Bay, it is the Nipissing District Roman Catholic Separate School Board providing services for hearing-impaired children. They have bent over backwards to accommodate our children, but they are tied to the system. They are tied to the ministry guidelines. We would really like to see them have more autonomy to do what we all feel is best for the children and not necessarily what is laid down on a piece of paper. At this point, John—

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Mr. Valiquette: Are we allowed to interject here?

Mrs. Valiquette: Go ahead.

Madam Chairman: Yes, certainly.

Mrs. Valiquette: I am used to it.

Mr. Valiquette: Every year, as it comes along, usually I start off the presentation and then Michelle takes over and I do not get a chance to say anything.

Madam Chairman: That is how it should be, but proceed.

Mrs. Valiquette: That is right.

Mr. Valiquette: We thought we would show you we were not so chauvinistic, so with the two men we would let the woman speak.

Madam Chairman: Maybe you had better not proceed.

Interjections.

Mr. Valiquette: Every year when it comes to identification and placement review committee time, naturally we go into the IPRC and say we want our children in the neighbourhood school and it goes through a formality now. Of course, the superintendent says to us, “We cannot because we are tied to memo 76C.” But that does not stop us. Every year we go in. Sarah Jane is three now and we hope by the time she starts school, they will be able to say, “We now have the opportunity to let her go to a neighbourhood school with her friends so that she will have some friends in the neighbourhood.”

Our objective as parents is to get our children to be as normal as they possibly can. Of course, part of that is being able to go to McDonald’s and order a hamburger and be able to go to your neighbourhood school with your friends, walk home with them and not go on the bus for an hour

when you are four years old. Those are the simple things we want to attain, but we are tied again, as Michelle was saying. We are friends with the superintendent and the principals and we go in with the same request every year. They say, "Maybe some year it will occur." Michelle swears by the time Sarah Jane is six, she will be in our neighbourhood school.

A lot of the problems we are going to talk about are problems dealing with the north. If you live in the north, you know, there is a smaller population and more travelling. We are always going to deal with that.

Mrs. Valiquette: At this point, John would like to explain the situation that has occurred with his family?

Mr. Stephens: My daughter, through no fault of her own and through the board, has been in three schools for the hearing-impaired in the last four years. They started the program in one school hiring a teacher. Two years later, because of enrolment, shifting of patterns, they moved to another school. We were all promised that they would stay there, simply because it takes at least two to three years to have an entire staff realize the needs of the hearing-impaired kids, how different they are, especially in the playground, and what is needed for them to be integrated in the school.

Last year, they were transferred again. We had to deal dramatically with it, go to the board, do presentations and write letters, because they were going originally to move the kids because of a French-immersion conflict to a school, without realizing that the sound levels and things like that, the noise of trains and so forth, would bother them.

Most people, when they try to set up programs, especially with the self-contained classroom for special education needs, can move kids around sometimes, but hearing-impaired kids really find it difficult to adapt to excess noise. For example, this year, my daughter is 11 years old. She is in a new classroom. She loves being there, but the other day she made a comment to her teacher, "I like it, but you are too noisy." For her to say something like "too noisy" when she came home and said how great it was, meant she was complaining about the noise from the chairs. The classroom is being fitted with a rug, but it has not been done yet simply because of logistics. It will probably be done in the next few days, but she came and had enough courage to go to the teacher and say that.

To me, when he called me and said, "Your daughter was really upset," that was the greatest

thing, that she went up and verbally said, "Mr. Brooks, your classroom is too noisy," and she has profound deafness. She enjoys dancing and other activities as well. This is one of the things we are concerned about, that they can go to a school, make friends, be happy and communicate in the school. We were concerned about her third school and having no friends. Within three days, she kept talking about having lunch with so-and-so and so-and-so. I said, "Can you hear them?" She said, "Fine." As parents we go back to how does a child cope with the teachers and the other staff?

Here is where the board has given professional development for the staff. They have prepared the teachers, but it will take another two years before the entire staff will feel comfortable in dealing with these hearing-impaired kids. My daughter does extremely well with her profound deafness because she overcompensates. She is very visual and she pretends she hears people because she lipreads so well. Then she will come home and I will say, "What did they say?" "I do not know." She just nods and catches the drift once in a while. That is how I realized that. They are trying their best right now to provide the classroom.

Right now, she is in a class, an average class of 32, grades 5 and 6 split. There are a number of students who are all IPRC, as she is as well. As a regular classroom teacher, as a teacher myself, it is hard to deal not only with a hearing-impaired child but also with all the other children you have in your classroom. It takes a while to get used to it.

This is why as a parents' group, as Voice, we spend hours coming home and developing vocabulary. How a teacher in the classroom, a regular classroom teacher, can cope with all the other students as well as with hearing-impaired children is very difficult without adequate training. That is why we are hoping that if they can change the format of the funding for the classrooms, we could get more people involved and children would have a better chance of adapting in classrooms and in the school environment.

Mrs. Valiquette: Just to summarize, what we would like is the availability of auditory-verbal services. We do not get that right now through the Ministry of Education. The residential schools, as they stand, adopt a total communication philosophy. There are very, very few auditory-verbal specialists in Ontario.

For the teachers of the deaf who are trained, we would really like to see a course developed

associated with a major university so that it is separate from the residential school for the deaf, which immediately, I feel, makes the teacher feel that these children have great limitations, which in many, many cases, for most of the children who have gone through the auditory-verbal process, is not the case. They are functioning well.

We have had to work very hard in order to get our children to fit into the community. They are very involved. We have a nine-year-old who is a gymnast. They are in music and they are in dancing. But we need support. We get a little bit tired of fighting and going around, sending memos and things like that, in order to tell people what we feel is very, very important.

What we would like, just as it says in our brief basically, is to have an auditory-verbal program available for us, and we would like the teachers of the deaf to be trained using the auditory-verbal approach or at least to have some experience in some of the centres, such as Toronto and Ottawa, where this method is being used and the parents have access to it on a weekly basis. In North Bay, we get it once a month and it is not enough.

Do you have anything more to add, John?

Mr. Valiquette: There is a problem in getting the proper teacher with the auditory-verbal therapist qualifications. The teacher who is trained whom we are getting now was trained at Sir James Whitney and, as Michelle said in the beginning, trained through total communication as a primary mode of education and mode of speech.

We had difficulty in hiring that teacher. I remember going back a few years that when we finally found out through the in lieu of grant that we had the money, we jumped up and celebrated, but we found out, when we advertised all across North America, that we could not get a teacher. We got our grant at the end of December, but we could not hire a teacher until the following June for the following September. We found out that of the 22 graduates coming out of Sir James Whitney, 14 were sent there by Metro Toronto; so really there were not 22 coming out, there were six. Of course, we were naïve in finding that out.

Then when the teacher comes, because she is not trained extensively in the auditory-verbal system, we have to turn around, as a parents' group, and try to be very touchy about how we train this teacher, because we do not have that teacher for one year and then the child moves on; we have that teacher, if she is good and if the board likes her, for ever. As Michelle says, we

have to do it with kid gloves. Michelle sneaks into the classroom for the first time and the teacher is doing this to the child, the lips are going crazy; but any hearing-impaired person will tell you, "Speak normally to me." So we have to try to tell her, "Lower your voice, don't exaggerate your lips and do things like this."

As soon as she leaves, somebody else comes in and we have to start all over again without trying to cross over the board problems. An educational setting is not parent-oriented. Being in education myself, and a lot of us are in education, we know that parents go in for a certain period, but once the kids get into the junior level, they do not want the parents there anyway. It is not the school system's fault totally, but it is not a parent system.

Because the auditory-verbal therapy means the therapist working with us as parents, we want to be able to work with that child for 24 hours a day. Until we pull those hearing aids out at 10 o'clock when they finally crash, we have to be involved. We have to be involved, not at age nine or 10, but age two; with Sarah Jane, at age three weeks. We want to be involved then, and we are having a difficult time because the education system does not want to involve us, not to its fault. That is why we talk about the Ministry of Health.

1650

Mrs. Valiquette: Getting back to the availability of the auditory-verbal services, I had just written down some points that I thought were useful. The Ministry of Health is good to offer these types of services, because it is a different setting. You are away from the school. If a parent feels intimidated by the school setting, you are away from the school. It places the focus on the parents. You are making the effort as a parent to bring this child for therapy. Therefore, you are the one who is ultimately responsible for the continuation of this program.

The staff in a hospital or public health setting is used to working in conjunction with parents, doctors, audiologists especially. Having this therapy with an audiologist around, if any troubleshooting has to be done with the hearing aids—dead batteries, broken tubing, just the nitty-gritty—it can be done before therapy begins.

I like the idea of getting the auditory-verbal therapy actually away from the school when it is focusing on the parents rather than the child, because the school, as John said, is very much child-oriented, which is great, but we also need the parent focus, especially with the hearing-impaired children.

Madam Chairman: I would like to really thank you for your presentation. Having it back-to-back with the Ottawa presentation yesterday, it has made many of the issues come alive for us, particularly when you talk to us about your children and the difficulties you have encountered. I very much appreciate it, and also the commitment that you as parents have put into this process.

It reminded me of a comment made by representatives of the Alliance for Children—Ontario in the July hearings when they were before us. They said, “The professionals are in for the sprint, but the parents are in for the marathon.” I thought that was such a wonderful phrase. They were not denigrating the professionals at all. They just said it is the parents who know their children best. It is quite interesting that you really have to train the teachers, quite often, when your children are going into this setting. I wish you luck in that.

On a lighter note, the other reason I am glad that you have this back-to-back presentation is that I get a chance to redeem myself for yesterday. You have a new, improved chair, who is not going to talk about seeing-ear dogs, who is not going to omit mentioning Mr. Johnston’s fine work with the hearing-impaired and his speech in the House and who is not going to omit that Mrs. O’Neill made her maiden speech in the House on the hearing-impaired. Now that I have that off my chest, we can continue.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Mea culpa.

Madam Chairman: Yes. We are starting over. I think Mr. Johnston has a question.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think we all share the same feeling about the importance of the presentation, so my thanks as well.

How many auditory-verbal specialists are there in Ontario? We keep hearing that they are mostly in Metro and Ottawa, and there are itinerants; but how many are there?

Mrs. Pryde: I am just counting up the numbers. Including the itinerant therapists, I believe there are seven. In addition, there are some itinerant teachers with school boards who have taken some training in the auditory-verbal approach. But basically there are seven, if my numbers are correct.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is a tiny number. I just thought the members should understand. I did not know what the numbers were, I just knew there were not many. I continue picking up this need for more but not realizing just how few there are.

The other thing is, I am not sure members understand, but I have thought of this as problematic for all parents who are using this system, and it must be especially so for parents in the north; that is, the role of the parent in this system, for the preschooler, is just vital. We have not had a chance to see the video yet, which is another thing we could have done today, I suppose, but I wonder if you can just talk a little bit about how that works. The role of the parent and therefore the effect on the family, time and the economics of the family, all that kind of thing, things that members should know a little bit about.

Mrs. Valiquette: I think it is unfortunate, as I said to the fellows on the way down, that a lot of what you do with your child when your child is diagnosed as being deaf is just luck of the draw. If you happen to be born in Toronto, if you happen to see a good audiologist, if you happen to be put in touch with a parent group, then things go along smoothly.

But if those things do not occur or if you do not reach out, if you are in a lower economic bracket or just not as assertive as some of us are, you do not get the same services. It is very difficult. I think a lot of it depends on how you are as an individual parent. I do not think that is the way it should be. I think all parents should have the support.

Children surprise us. They really do. Even myself, I have been involved in this now for—Lianne is nine—about nine years I guess. With children, we thought: “My goodness, they are hopeless. They will never work.” With parents you think: “My goodness, they have so many other things on the go and so many priorities. They have so many other problems in their lives right now. They cannot possibly think this is important.” With support, you would be so surprised at how well a child can do, but the support has to be there.

It does involve a lot of time. When our oldest was diagnosed as being hearing-impaired, this was all new to us so it was daily lessons, trips to Toronto and lots of reading. We considered moving to Toronto or Ottawa, but we decided that we would stay in North Bay. That is our community. Our families are there. Our support is there. We tried to get the services we needed for our children there. It has worked out great; it really has. The services we have for our children in North Bay are excellent, but we would like to add to them.

When our youngest daughter was diagnosed we felt at least this time we know what to do.

Sometimes I think I am not doing enough with her, but I think it is just ingrained now. Everything we do with that child is part of her learning. We are constantly looking to new situations to further her learning process.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But it is very difficult. For instance, before the child is born, both people are working and presuming to go back to their jobs. Then the child is diagnosed. The fact that your second child was diagnosed in three weeks is highly unusual.

Mrs. Valiquette: Highly unusual.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Often it would be quite late. There are all these kinds of constraints, both in terms of travel time to get down, but also just the impact about whether or not you can both go back to your jobs, which you might have been intending to do or which you needed to do in order to maintain your home or whatever. The impacts are really incredible on the family.

Mrs. Valiquette: This is where I think, too, the flexibility of the auditory-verbal therapist is very important. Catherine is very flexible. She will see kids at 7:30 in the morning. She will see kids at nine o'clock at night. She is very flexible. She is not tied to the rigid school schedule. That is certainly a help. It is hard on her, but it is great for us.

Mr. Valiquette: She is travelling all over the province, as you have probably heard, so we get her only once a month. She is funded totally by Voice, whose funds, as you may have heard, are running out. We are now in the process of going into our communities and making presentation after presentation to different groups, trying to solicit funds so that we can keep her coming. We see her only 10 times a year.

Mrs. Valiquette: People ask: "Why are you not getting the service from the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Health? Why do you as parents have to go out and solicit funds for a teacher?" Then, of course, we have to get into the whole story of what we have, what we want and the different approaches and everything like that. It is difficult.

Mr. Stephens: I was always one of the people totally against going to the four o'clock or five o'clock speech classes. First of all, your daughter is burned out and you are burned out from all day. You sit there and you know that you have to pay more attention than the actual child, because you have to go home for the next month and do all the lessons and the retraining with them.

At first it was easy to say: "That is it. Forget it. We are not going back." Then you come up with

scenarios where you do hear them using the structures and they have the right grammar. Then you have the guilt feelings. Then you go back to the program. You sit back and it is hard to concentrate. Your daughter will be working. When they come back, they have headaches.

In the long run, it is once a month and you realize it is beneficial. It is costing Voice a lot of money, but we would like to take some of those same funds, whether it is the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education, and provide someone locally in one of the settings so that children could have a speech class out of the school environment. It is not like having a speech class for 20 minutes three times a week in the school. It is such a specialized area, especially with the auditory-verbal work.

I technically did not like it because I did not fully understand the program. I asked, "Why are they doing these high-level brain activities, making the kids think about it instead of really trying to have them listen to the activities and then use the vocabulary they have and the hearing they have?" At first I was always against the therapist talking like this with her hands. I said: "Why waste time? We are only here for an hour. Speak a little more clearly right away, instead of using your hand to go like this all the time and make little, dumb scenarios."

1700

At the end, you would realize that by forcing her to listen without trying to lip-read, because my daughter is an exceptional lip-reader, she was really being frustrated when the hand was there and forcing herself to listen. Now, only 10 so-called one-hour lessons later, you see the improvement, especially in the speech patterns, where people will say: "Oh, I didn't know she was deaf. You're kidding. Her pronunciation is as good as mine." Yet she cannot hear the s's and sh's and various different levels on the speech banana curve. Then you realize it is all worthwhile; it is frustrating because we cannot have more of it.

Mrs. Valiquette: Oftentimes, with my three-year-old, if she will not understand something lip-reading, I just say it right into her hearing aid and she will pick it up. She will pick up the speech and the sound of it. If she says something to us and we do not understand it, she says it right into our hearing aids and says, "Don't you understand, Mom? I want some candy," or something like that. It is interesting.

As Mr. Stephens said, one of the things we do try to do with our children is cover our mouths so that they are forced to use their hearing aids. We

do not ask strangers to do that, but if we do it at home and they are forced to use their hearing aids to listen, then when they get into a situation with somebody who has a beard or somebody who does not enunciate, they will have that training behind them. They have to use it or else they will lose it.

Mr. Valiquette: I think we are very fortunate, in a way, in having children who are handicapped in an area where we can see progress and we can reap the rewards. You are going to hear about all the different exceptionalities. I think we were lucky in being introduced into a group called Voice, which showed us that this was the right way to go. As we go along, there are long gaps when we do not see any progress, but we know we will always be striving towards something better for our children.

Mr. Stephens: They will have the opportunity to speak. If they do determine at some time in their life to revert to signing, at least they will have both opportunities.

Mr. Valiquette: I will tell you the one thing that probably motivated us more than anything else. I do not like to mention the school. My wife went down with Lianne, perhaps two months after diagnosis. Sir James Whitney School offered a program for parents. I drove them down. My wife stayed. At the time Renée was four. She was as normal as can be, with normal hearing. They were at Sir James Whitney for five days, and at the end of the five days Renée was not speaking. My wife said: "Renée, you have to speak to these children because they have to listen to you if they are going to be able to speak." Renée said: "Why should I? Nobody else speaks here."

We thought if that is what is going to happen, boy, we are going to make darned sure that child does not end up in a residential school. Along with the parents we talked to, we feel that regardless of your child's handicap, you want to raise him or her in your own family. It would tear my heart apart to have my child have to go away, even if they fly her back every weekend. To me, that child is just not getting a regular life.

Mrs. O'Neill: Before I ask my question, I would like to say two things. I think the disability that I will say you have been blessed with brings the parent and child and teacher together more than most disabilities. It is an extremely highly co-operative effort and involves the home and the school in its best form. I have visited many of the sites where your child's disability is being programmed for, so I think it is a mixed blessing. I really do.

You said you hope your child will some day, or is already, ordering hamburgers at McDonald's. This summer, I did a lot of travel, most of it in Ontario but some of it in the Maritimes. On two occasions, I saw the people who took the orders at McDonald's being the hearing-impaired. They are moving in that stream, which is a very high-stress environment, especially around the lunch hour, and they are fitting in. I am sure very few people even knew they were hearing-impaired, but I happened to be able to detect the appliances which, as you know, now are much more peer-oriented. I was very happy to see that.

My question goes to concern 4 that you have here, which involves the speech pathologist. I wonder if you could say a little bit more about that home care program because, as I understand it, your child's exceptionality is the only one in the Education Act that permits entrance before 3.8 years. That is why I do not see how this fits with that, if you could help me with that.

Mrs. Valiquette: Speech pathology is a separate service that is required for a deaf child, separate from what the teacher of the hearing-impaired does. Actually, the Nipissing Board of Education just recently got another speech pathologist. They are very difficult to get. We do not know if that speech pathologist, at this point, will be involved in direct therapy. Usually they are flooded just with assessments. So we look to the home care program for help in speech.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is out of the regional district health council, the home care program, is that right?

Mrs. Valiquette: That is right. However, the mandate for the speech pathologist, through the home care program, is to work not with hearing-impaired children but with children with severe articulation problems. She puts down that our children have severe articulation problems and so she is able to work with them at this point in time. But we understand that is being cut off.

What we are saying is that we feel our children, apart from all these other things, also need speech pathology. They also need a speech pathologist to work with them on speech. A teacher of the hearing-impaired is not trained to work solely on speech. A speech pathologist can go in and say, "These are the things you should be working on." For instance, it took Lianne two years to get her "s" sound through speech. Because she cannot hear it, she has to get it in other ways.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think you have explained it enough.

Mrs. Valiquette: Do you understand?

Mrs. O'Neill: Yes. You certainly have helped me, and I am pleased with your answer. It will help me understand the situation better. Thanks a lot. I have been given a brief memo that we have to move on.

Madam Chairman: I am sorry to give you the hook, Yvonne, but we have just run out of time. The Hansard people have just sent us a note saying they are going to string us up if they have to stay overnight, because they cannot pack up the equipment in time to catch the plane.

Under those circumstances, we would very

much like to thank you for your presentation before us today.

Mrs. Valiquette: Thank you very much for listening.

Madam Chairman: While we still have most of the members here, I will just tell you that our first two presentations tomorrow are the Metro Toronto School Board at 10 a.m. and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at 11 a.m. For your information, we will be in committee room 1, not room 151.

The committee adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

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No. E-19

Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Select Committee on Education

Organization of the Education Process

First Session, 34th Parliament

Thursday, September 22, 1988



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday, September 22, 1988

The committee met at 10:08 a.m. in committee room 1.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. I would like to open the hearings of the select committee on education. Welcome to all the participants this morning. We have just come back from a trip to Ottawa and Sudbury. As enjoyable as it was to be in those communities, it is also nice to be back in Toronto.

Our first presentation this morning will be by the Metropolitan Toronto School Board as we continue our review of the organizational system in Ontario education. We will be looking at OSIS, streaming, semestering and grade promotion, and undoubtedly other issues will come up as we proceed.

Just before we go to the Metropolitan Toronto School Board, our researcher, Bob Gardner, has a few comments about the summary that is before members at the moment.

Mr. Gardner: This is the first of a number of summaries the committee will get. It really only covers a couple of days of the first week, but as you know, we do this on a running basis and we thought you may as well have the first one in front of you. It will basically keep to this kind of form if that is acceptable to the committee, and we will add on the concerns and recommendations you hear from other groups here and in the other cities as we go. You will be getting certainly several more before the end, and then a final compilation of all the briefs at the end of the hearings.

Madam Chairman: The other thing, Mr. Gardner, is that perhaps you would not mind just commenting on the census data we have ordered.

Mr. Gardner: I was speaking to the Statistics Canada people in Ottawa, and they are experiencing some delays in the final checking of the data. I have told them, in your collective names, that we are not best pleased with those delays and we will try to hurry them through as quickly as possible. I will be continuing that, but I will have a clearer prognosis on exactly when they will get it to us by next week.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Now to the business of the day. I would like to welcome the Metropolitan Toronto School Board. Welcome to you, Ann Vanstone. It is nice to see you again. If you could begin by introducing your presenters for the purpose of electronic Hansard, you may begin whenever you wish. We have allocated an hour for your presentation, including time for questions, so we hope you could leave a substantial amount of time for the members to ask questions, if it is at all possible.

PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS IN METROPOLITAN TORONTO

Mrs. Vanstone: It is my hope as well that we will be able to get through our presentation in time to answer questions, but if there is not enough time, we would be happy to make ourselves or any of our staff available to anybody from your committee after you have had time to read the presentation.

This is not a presentation of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board. It is a presentation by the public boards of education in Metropolitan Toronto.

I would like to introduce to you my colleagues, starting at my far right: Pat Hainer, chairman of the York Board of Education in the city of York; Dianne Williams, chairman of the Scarborough Board of Education, city of Scarborough; Mary Raymond, chairman of the Etobicoke Board of Education, city of Etobicoke; Ken Maxsted, chairman of the East York Board of Education, the only borough in Canada, and David Moll, chairman of the Toronto Board of Education. I am Ann Vanstone, chairman of the Metro board.

We should like to thank the members of the select committee on education for the opportunity to present some views of the public school boards in Metropolitan Toronto regarding OSIS, streaming, grade promotion, semestering and dropouts. While we understand that the committee's deliberations are focusing on these five issues at this time, we believe they are inextricably linked to the broader context of the philosophy and goals of education. Therefore, before commenting directly on the specific topics, I propose to outline briefly the context from which the public school boards in Metro Toronto approach these topics. I will do this context

setting, and each of the board chairmen will present some views on each of the specific issues; those views will have been prepared by the staff of that chairman's board.

The six area boards which comprise the Metro federation under the umbrella of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board are East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, Toronto and York. These boards operate elementary and secondary educational programs for over 250,000 pupils in their jurisdictions. The Metropolitan Toronto School Board operates public schools for the trainable retarded for the entire Metropolitan Toronto area. On January 1, 1989, a new partner will join the public school federation in Metropolitan Toronto, making a seventh area board. At this time, we will welcome the Metropolitan Toronto French-Language School Council as it assumes responsibility for the education of our French-language students.

In previous submissions to the standing committee on social development in August 1985 regarding Bill 30, and to the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario in November 1984, the public school boards argued extensively that a nonsectarian, fully accessible, publicly funded and publicly accountable school system throughout Ontario is critical to the pursuit of democratic and humanitarian goals in a pluralistic society.

The commitment of the public school taxpayers of Metropolitan Toronto to public education reflects the high priority which education holds in this community. The Metropolitan Toronto School Board will spend \$1.6 billion for education in 1988, of which only three per cent is derived from provincial grants—zero per cent in the elementary panel and 4.5 per cent in the secondary panel.

The public school boards of Metropolitan Toronto employ over 15,000 full-time teachers to provide education for over 250,000 full-time, day-school students. In addition, in 1987-88, the public school boards offered a wide variety of continuing education, basic literacy, citizenship, English-as-a-second-language and credit courses to approximately 60,000 adults. Heritage language programs are offered to elementary students in public schools in the Metropolitan Toronto area in more than 35 languages.

Large urban areas tend to draw refugee and immigrant populations. Metropolitan Toronto is no exception. For example, in September 1987, just one year ago, the public school boards in Metro Toronto registered 7,522 students who had recently arrived in Canada. These were new

registrations. In the Etobicoke board alone, this represented a 198.9 per cent increase in new-comer registration at the secondary school level in 1987-88 over 1986-87.

When the official registration statistics have been compiled for September of this year, we anticipate that the numbers of refugees and immigrants will have increased substantially again over last year. While we welcome these students in our school systems, they do require some significant additional services to ensure their successful integration into our society.

I would draw to your attention the final appendix here, Appendix E. Those are figures and statistics that have just been compiled. This is the first time they have been published.

In today's society, both parents frequently work outside the home. There are increasing numbers of single-parent homes. Thus the need for child care, both for youngsters of preschool age and for school-age children, before and after school, is particularly acute in the Metropolitan Toronto area.

The recent policy of the government of Ontario to provide for the construction of day care facilities in conjunction with the building of new schools does nothing to alleviate the problems related to the need for additional day care spaces in the existing schools in Metropolitan Toronto. The space requirements for day care facilities as defined under the Day Nurseries Act are frequently incompatible with existing school facilities. Any reasonable policy to allocate government funds for the provision of new day care facilities should also provide for necessary renovations and alterations to available space in existing school buildings.

The approximately 550 schools operated by the public school boards in Metro Toronto are estimated to be worth \$3 billion. Many of our schools are more than 50 years old and are seriously in need of renovation and/or replacement. If the public school boards in Metro are to maintain these facilities for our educational programs, they must receive capital allocations either to renovate or to replace several schools per year.

In Metro, we have been receiving a capital allocation for one major renovation or replacement project every 10 years. At this rate, it will take us 5,500 years to renew our existing capital stock, a patently ridiculous situation.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Why rush it?

Mrs. Vanstone: While we recognize that the problems we have identified exist throughout the province, the multiplicity and concentration of

these concerns in Metro make the resolution of them more complex.

In March and April of this year, the Metropolitan Toronto School Board commissioned the Environics Research Group Ltd. to undertake a comprehensive survey of residents' attitudes towards public education in Metropolitan Toronto. This opinion poll confirmed that Metro residents have a high degree of commitment to the public school system as the cornerstone of primary and secondary education in Metropolitan Toronto. We are pleased to have been able to provide some of the data from this opinion poll to the select committee at an earlier date, and I believe you have that information in your files. What you have basically shows that by far the top priority for the residents was basic skills, followed by learning skills, if you like.

We do not propose to highlight the important findings of this opinion poll in detail. However, given that the committee has heard representations from some private religiously based schools wishing to receive public funding, we would like to draw the committee's attention to one aspect of our poll.

Metro residents are tolerant of religions other than their own. They see the development of social skills and moral values as being very important goals for our education system. However, Environics president Michael Adams, in discussing the data resulting from this opinion poll, has observed that the Metro public is comfortable with public schools offering optional religious instruction to those who want it, but that residents are unlikely to support publicly funded education based on a strong religious ideology of any type.

In his presentation to the Metro school board, Adams went on to say that some people may support full funding of Roman Catholic separate schools, for example, simply because they see it as a move towards a single public school system, one that offers religious education in its schools but does not provide compulsory religious instruction. The message appears to be, "Keep the public schools strong."

In addition to this presentation, various area boards in Metro have developed background material which is appended for the committee's further consideration and detailed examination. It should be understood that these discussion papers do not necessarily represent a consensus of the public boards of education in Metropolitan Toronto. Rather, they are presented to stimulate your committee's deliberations. In presenting these papers, the public school boards expect that

they will be afforded further opportunities to discuss the committee's draft recommendations.

Now the chairmen of the area boards will provide a summary of each of the critical issues. I will call on Dianne Williams from the Board of Education for the City of Scarborough to talk about OSIS.

1020

Mrs. Williams: The policy which governs secondary school programs in Ontario was developed in the early 1980s as a result of an extensive consultation and review project. That review recognized the breadth, complexity and importance of secondary education in this province. It also recognized the interdependence of the many components of the entire educational enterprise. One of the major conclusions of that review was the desirability for students to be able to move through the system, either laterally or vertically, at their own pace.

The review resulted in the policy document that we commonly call OSIS. The current questions to be asked concern the extent to which the changes mandated in OSIS in 1984 have been realized, and what now needs to be done to prepare for not only the 1990s, but indeed a whole new century.

The first four-year cycle of the implementation of OSIS has just been completed. Does this mean no attempt should be made to adjust OSIS at the present time? Of course not. A fine-tuning may well be in order, but a major overhaul, we would suggest, is not indicated at this time. As the chairman of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board has pointed out, we do have a background paper but I would like to outline the recommendations contained in that appendix.

We feel that the goals of education for the province of Ontario must place greater emphasis on the development of basic knowledge and skills in language, mathematics and learning and study skills.

The ministry must provide the additional funds and resources for the new required courses that are outlined in OSIS. As courses change quickly, it is necessary for local boards to provide students with expensive new textbooks and teachers with detailed course outlines which are costly and time-consuming to produce. Adequate ministry funds must be provided to assist boards in new textbook purchases, curriculum development and teacher in-service, which is most important. The declining level of grant support in Metro combined with the recommended and costly curriculum changes places an impossible task on

the local boards and really a burden on local taxpayers.

The ministry must ensure that new courses are not recommended until the required guidelines and textbooks are available to the schools. This problem has created disruption and really a credibility gap in the schools. There must be better co-ordination between new course announcements, the provision of supporting guidelines and textbooks and the provision of funds for implementation.

Schools also should have the right to offer courses at a common level of difficulty. There are some subjects or even grade levels where students may benefit by being grouped together as a homogeneous unit and studying material at a common level. Local boards should be allowed to make local decisions in this area responding to the individual needs of their communities.

The ministry should continue to study the changes made under OSIS and the compulsory credit requirements and the impact this is having on enrolment patterns. For example, centralized data are needed to study the effect of the 30-credit diploma requirements on general-level and basic-level dropout rates in those two levels and the relation of compulsory credits to society's expectations of graduates.

We further recommend that centralized studies should be done to investigate why technological and business studies have continued to decline under OSIS at a time when technology is so important to the success of our country.

We feel too that the Ministry of Education must collaborate with the universities to provide an alternative to Ontario academic course English 1, to accommodate the English-as-a-second-language or ESL/dialect students who have all the other requirements for a diploma, and usually quite high standing in those requirements, and entrance to the university but who cannot reach, within the short time they have been here, the standards of OAC 1 English.

The focus of the intermediate division should be more clearly defined in a practical manner and should strongly emphasize the development of basic skills in language and mathematics, as well as learning and study skills. This division in the elementary schools is the key to the preparation for secondary education and should not be defined in such general terms, as it is in OSIS, as "integration of learning experiences."

We feel too that the special education programs are essential but they should not be used to support students attempting subjects at inappropriate levels of difficulty.

I will simply conclude by saying that OSIS has stimulated momentum for renewal of programs and courses at the intermediate and senior levels in our Ontario schools. It has facilitated specific changes in school calendars, courses of study, codes of behaviour and so on. Many excellent staff development sessions on topics such as goal setting, teaching strategies, learning outcomes and student evaluation have resulted in considerable curriculum activity. Because OSIS has promoted so many positive changes and because implementation is still in the early stages, imminent major changes are really inappropriate.

It is, however, timely to consider concerns which have come to light in the last few years and the recommendations, such as are suggested in this paper. Educators really need more time to implement OSIS fully and to evaluate the full impact of the implementation.

Mr. Maxted: There are two general concepts of moving students from level to level within the formal education system: grade promotion or social promotion. This has always been and remains a contentious issue.

The real issue in the grade versus social promotion discussion is not the merits of alternative promotion practices but the educational problem of ensuring that children learn content, skills and attitudes appropriate to their age and stage of development so that they do not fall permanently behind and eventually drop out of formal education on that account.

We believe that this issue must be addressed primarily in the context of teacher training. All partners in the educational enterprise, including the Ministry of Education, faculties of education, boards of education, administrators, federations and individual teachers must accept responsibility for ensuring that teachers have adequate training and pedagogical expertise to plan programs which are appropriate for the students, no matter what their needs.

The select committee, in considering this topic, ought to address the following questions:

(a) What measures will ensure that teachers are adequately trained in diagnostic procedures to ensure that they are able to assess each student's development?

(b) What measures can the various professional constituency groups—Ministry of Education, faculties of education, administrators, principals and teachers—take to ensure that teachers have the pedagogical preparedness to teach heterogeneous groups of students effectively?

(c) What human and fiscal resources will ensure that teachers have the ability to provide individualized learning opportunities for students and to track student progress?

The argument of the merits of grade promotion versus social promotion is a red herring. The real issue is how to structure the learning environment so that each child develops the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities in coherent and systematic fashion. Educational research overwhelmingly indicates that it is counterproductive to have a child retained in a grade if he or she has not acquired all the content normally presented in a particular grade. School boards accept the responsibility to ensure that students develop these requisite skills. We want to work cooperatively with our professional partners so that all the necessary conditions obtain for students to learn successfully within the system.

1030

Mrs. Raymond: In the context of education, the word "streaming" can have various meanings. For the purpose of this overview, let us state that streaming is the separation and/or grouping of students of similar interests, abilities, energies, educational goals, talents, maturity, achievements, exceptionalities or learning styles for instructional or educational purposes. It could also be stated in another way. It is the division of heterogeneous groups into sets of more or less homogeneous groups in order to meet certain goals. These goals may be specific or general, of an academic nature or interest-related, and aimed at skill development or the fulfilment of philosophical goals.

Throughout educational history in Ontario, there have been many types of streaming employed, both at the elementary and secondary school levels, with a view to improving the quality of educational programming for students. For the most part, streaming has been more evident in the secondary schools because of Ministry of Education initiatives, starting with the Roberts plan, through HS1 and, now, OSIS. In all of these initiatives, the level of difficulty of course content was identified by a specific label. But streaming or ability grouping also occurs in virtually every elementary classroom in the province.

The main purpose of streaming, whether it is a model from the past or the result of the instructional levels of difficulty mandated by the ministry, is to provide appropriate instruction to meet the needs of individual students. Indeed, I believe there is a sense in which the individualized program mandated by the ministry is the

ultimate in streaming. Some of the perceived advantages of organizing students for instructional purposes into homogeneous groups include the provision of better and more appropriate instruction and the ability to make more efficient use of time, human resources and facilities.

Under OSIS, students have the option to choose courses from among three levels of difficulty according to their interests, abilities and aspirations. In practice, students tend to choose the vast majority of their courses at one level, and although there is freedom to move from one level of difficulty to another, it is obviously much easier to move down a level than up. As a result, students choosing levels other than the advanced tend to find themselves locked in. It is this aspect of secondary school organization to which opponents of streaming object.

Of course, there are negative aspects to streaming which we must address and minimize. We do, however, believe that there is no one teaching strategy or course content appropriate for every student. Therefore, the main pedagogical question is, what conditions must obtain in order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills in a learning environment appropriate to his or her needs, abilities and aspirations?

Educational research seems divided on the effects of streaming on student performance. Numerous studies have shown that, too often, the less able students, the pupils from impoverished homes, those from environments where education has not been held as a high priority and where models in the homes of reading, writing or computational skills were low-functioning have received a lower quality of program delivery.

Clearly, such a state of affairs is unsatisfactory. The answer to these problems does not necessarily rest with mainstreaming everyone. Rather, there must be a renewed commitment on the part of teachers, administrators and politicians to the upgrading of teaching skills, the development of relevant, imaginative programs for all and appropriate enrichment and remedial assistance where needed.

Streaming has been and can continue to be a positive force in the educational experience of all learners. Although we support the concept of streaming, program placement must be undertaken in consultation with parents and students and must reflect their long-range goals. There should always be opportunities for students to move to more challenging levels of study, as is contemplated in OSIS.

In summary then, it is our opinion that the concept of selective streaming for students is appropriate; that parents should have opportunities to be consulted about and request permission to enrol students in unique alternative schools and/or programs when and where they are available.

A variety of streams within a board and/or a school is appropriate. Students who are identified as exceptional should be placed in the least restrictive environment possible, recognizing that their special needs often create the necessity for some form of streaming. Curriculum expectations must be under constant review so that academic demands are appropriate to both age and ability.

Mr. Moll: While the practice of semestering is an alternative to traditional school scheduling, it is not new within the secondary schools of Ontario. The number of secondary schools adopting a semester system has increased significantly following the introduction of OSIS. Semestering options may include: (1) two semesters with full credits; (2) two semesters with full and half-course credits; (3) mixed two-semester and full-year courses; (4) mixed trimester and four-year courses.

Proponents of semestering list a number of advantages to the system:

First, peer subjects studied at one time provide students with the opportunity for greater in-depth attention to their courses.

Second, longer classroom periods allow: more student-student and student-teacher interaction; greater opportunity to varied teaching methodology; more effective completion of projects and experiments without interruption; less disruption of the school day; two period changes in a four-period day as compared to six period changes in an eight-period day; fewer teacher-pupil contacts per day, and better opportunity for teachers to discover and address individual student needs.

The third advantage is described as greater flexibility in accommodating student re-entry at mid-year. Last, there is more effective student sampling of subject areas to determine the best program of study for the individual.

Educators less enamoured of the semestering system cite the following disadvantages:

1. Absenteeism is much more costly to the student because of the greater concentration of material being taught in a double classroom period.

2. Greater consolidation of learning often results if the subject is taught over a longer period of time.

3. Time gaps in subjects not taken by a student for one or two semesters can result in extensive review requirements or skill loss.

4. Students unable to keep up with the pace of learning lag behind rapidly and become high-risk.

5. Subject content is not covered as completely as in full-year programs.

6. Interruptions to the school program are more costly in a semestered timetable than in a full-year schedule.

7. Work done by students in the classroom might be more profitably completed as homework.

8. Pedagogical adaptations necessary to obtain greater benefits from the longer classroom periods are often not undertaken.

9. Some subjects which have significant components of skill development, such as music and oral proficiency in second- and third-language acquisition, are better developed in the traditional models of school scheduling.

10. Co-curricular programs can also suffer if students choose not to participate in an activity related to a course which is not on their semester schedule. For example, a student who is not in the music program in a particular semester may choose not to take part in the co-curricular band orchestra or choir.

Critics also point out that many of the advantages of semestering can be achieved by introducing longer periods on an alternative-day, full-year system.

While some research has been conducted on the effects of semestering in Ontario schools, we believe that a significant amount of additional research would need to be undertaken before any definite conclusions could be reached. Many schools are exploring models which combine traditional and semestered timetabling.

In jurisdictions as large as Toronto, and indeed Metropolitan Toronto, because of our open attendance areas, our students have some options regarding scheduling patterns. We would be reluctant to see this flexibility reduced by a move to a mandated pattern of scheduling by the province. School boards and individual schools are in the best position to assess the needs of their students and community. Therefore, program flexibility ought to remain an area for local autonomy and direct public accountability.

1040

Mrs. Hainer: When the Honourable Mr. Conway moved that a select committee on education be appointed, he moved that the committee report on the "role of the formal

elementary and secondary school system in the successful transition of young students to adulthood in Ontario." That is from Hansard, February 11, 1988.

We acknowledge that the individual topics being addressed by the committee in this session relate to the successful transition of young students to adulthood, but we also believe that these topics cannot be addressed properly without examining the factors that affect what proportion of our young people experience success in the educational system. I commend to your attention the extensive position paper on dropouts which is appended.

The phenomenon of dropouts is ill-defined. More precise and carefully defined monitoring must be undertaken at the provincial level if educators and politicians are to understand clearly the extent of this problem.

At the present time, our society has not defined the achievement of a secondary school graduation diploma as an expectation for all students. Relabelling all courses as "open" or "X" level and removing all level designations in an attempt to eliminate the perceived abuses of streaming will not make all students equal in ability and performance. If the goal of secondary education is that 95 per cent to 98 per cent of the students attain an SSGD, then the standards and programs must enable them to do so.

In our view, the serious problem is not that many students lack an SSGD, but that they have not attained sufficient proficiency in basic numeracy and literacy to enable them to succeed at secondary school work or function in modern society. If we are to remedy this problem, educators, administrators and politicians must address the issues that contribute to this situation. In our view, research supports that intervention must occur in several of the following areas:

1. Significant attention must be paid to the issue of early literacy. Research indicates that if children have not begun to read by the end of grade 2, they have learned to cope with the school system without reading. The older a child is when being taught to read the longer it takes, the greater the cost and the lower the chance of success.

2. Research demonstrates conclusively that grade retention, that is, having a student repeat a complete year, does not lower dropout rates but rather contributes directly to increased dropout rates. While social promotion does not ensure that students entering grade 9 will have the necessary skills to complete a secondary program, grade retention virtually guarantees that

these same students will not attain an SSGD. Educators and researchers are concerned that the majority of children who repeat a year are boys, children born in the latter half of the year or children from minority groups.

3. The credit system as currently being timetabled in many schools has discouraged grouping the same students for more than one subject. Schools should consider packaging full programs for grades 9 and 10 students.

4. The extension and promotion of co-operative education in secondary schools is not only beneficial to the students in their transition to work but also gives the secondary schools a real opportunity to serve the nonacademically oriented students by enabling them to achieve a meaningful SSGD with dignity.

5. Good attendance is absolutely essential for success, particularly for grades 9 and 10 students. Grouping first- and even second-year students for most subjects has helped to encourage a class identity and to promote good attendance.

6. The three program levels of difficulty offered through the credit system are designed to ensure that students of varying backgrounds are offered academic challenges appropriate to their abilities and interests. Uniform standards of attainment are inappropriate in basic-level credits. Schools must be held accountable for carefully monitoring student marks for each subject and each teacher to ensure that standards are appropriate.

7. The school system must be designed to attract students back into it in order that they may have the opportunity to attain the necessary skills to participate fully in our complex society. Such programs and support facilities as continuing education courses, re-entry programs, adult day school programs for the upgrading of language literacy and life skills, child care facilities and community outreach are contributing to a return to school on the part of adults.

In summary, the dropout question is compounded by confusion in the goals of secondary education. If most students are expected to achieve a secondary graduation diploma, then the standards and the program must enable them to do so. Clarification of the definition of "dropout" is essential. A systematic procedure for obtaining the necessary factual data regarding rates of progress and completion is needed. The dropout problem is a reflection of the dilemma of early literacy in elementary schools. Grade retention does not help. Co-operative education is a very promising program modification that

can reduce dropout rates and serve students, but it comes at the senior division level.

It is recommended that the committee consider additional support for early literacy interventions in grades 2 and 3, continued support for co-operative education and re-entry programs for adults as practical approaches to resolving the high dropout ratio. Long-term goals should include a clear depiction of dropouts, a provincial data collection system and clarification of the goals of education.

Mrs. Vanstone: I would like to reiterate that the positions presented today do not represent a consensus of all the public school boards in Metropolitan Toronto, but are submitted to stimulate dialogue on the complex and challenging issues facing our formal education system.

The public school boards in Metro are committed to working co-operatively with the various constituency groups to ensure that the students graduating from our educational system have the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to effect a smooth transition to the community at large.

The program considerations you are considering must be seen in the context of the goals of education and the commitment of all partners to these goals. The public school boards in Metro have gone a long way to achieving the goals to which we aspire. We welcome the opportunity to work with you in reviewing the areas in which change would result in more effective educational programs for our students.

The public school trustees of Metro are encouraged by the optimism that our residents express about our school systems. Our vision recognizes difficulties and the constant need for improvement. These improvements come with a very definite price tag. Sufficient resources must be available to maintain the excellence of the public education system. While we recognize that the committee's deliberations are focusing on program issues, the committee must appreciate that the variety, the flexibility and the quality of programs it wishes to foster can be undertaken only if there is an underpinning of sufficient financial resources and adequate facilities. We recommend that any program recommendations made by this committee take into account the fiscal and human resources needed to implement them.

Ladies and gentlemen, representatives of the people of Ontario, our forefathers needed the public school system. We need it. We want it healthy and vigorous for our children and their children. The future depends on it.

We would be happy to attempt to answer any questions. I once again apologize for not having this brief to you early, but we did not take too long because we did not start until a quarter after 10.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. I certainly want to commend the Metro Toronto school board for its presentation. It was a plethora of information which you put very succinctly. You have highlighted not only the strengths and weaknesses in the system; you have also very clearly outlined some of the advantages and disadvantages of the policies we are examining right now. Personally, I was certainly quite impressed with it.

I would also point out to members that there is considerable material appended to the back, which I would suggest you take a look at when you have time because it is quite extensive.

Our times almost match, Mrs. Vanstone. I was also going to commend you for getting through it in such a short time. I noted that you started at 12 minutes after 10, so we are almost on with our time. That leaves just over 20 minutes.

1050

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would also like to thank the board for presenting all this information, and also for the way you have done it, allowing the individual boards to present their points of view. It is not clear and it would be very difficult for us to figure out where there is consensus and where there is not, which is a brilliant strategy.

Interjection: Politicians.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We may try that with our caucus from now on.

Mr. Maxsted: This is election year, you know.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes, true; it is a good point.

I was also staggered by the statistics around ESL increases. Those are really quite dramatic and are obviously a challenge to all of the boards in Metro, and not just the Toronto board or North York boards or whatever.

I have a few questions, if I might. Just as clarification, the easy ones maybe, some groups have come before us on this OSIS review business and have actually suggested there be an annual review of OSIS, a process developed now over the next number of years with all the partners in the education system participating. How does that strike you as a notion for doing what you are talking about about that review, that

it really needs that kind of an ongoing update at this stage?

Mrs. Vanstone: Dianne, do you want to try that?

Mrs. Williams: I could. I would say that any sort of review is welcome, because as you can see from our presentation, we do have some concerns. We are not about to throw the whole thing out because we have not implemented and there are not the guidelines in certain of the subject areas. Physical education and health is one of them and geography another. How can we look at it and review it if we do not even have it in place yet? We are waiting for those guidelines to come through.

I am not sure yearly, but certainly regularly.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other would be in terms of the collection of statistics on dropouts. The suggestion has been made again that for the next little while, first a system be developed for giving a consistent definition of what we are talking about and then, again each year from this point on, dropouts and drop-ins should be collected by the province in a systematic fashion for all of us to use. Is there general consensus?

Mrs. Hainer: I think that would be nothing but a benefit for all of us.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Because it does seem to me we are speaking about so many different things here.

There is one matter, if I might just move quickly to grade promotion; I know there are too many questions to ask, unfortunately, and a lot of members will want to get in. On the promotion section, it was stated in the paper that in fact the distinction between social promotion and grade promotion is "a red herring"; that was the term.

Although I take your rationale behind that to heart and agree with it, I am just wondering if that is really the case, because we heard from a group from the Timiskaming board yesterday, where they are systematically holding kids back in grades 1, 2 and 3 and believing it to be beneficial, the antithesis of the argument that is made in a couple of the other sections of your presentation today. I am wondering if that is one of the areas where there is not a consensus in Metro, or is there a fairly similar approach to the whole notion of grade promotion and social promotion across Metro? That is the primary question.

The supplementary to that, if I can just put it in at the same time, is that a notion has been brought forward by some groups that maybe the whole idea of grade promotion distinctions, for kindergarten to grade 3 at least, is incorrect because of

the different levels of entry, ages, etc., that have been talked about, and that maybe looking at that in a divisional fashion of promotion is more appropriate.

Mrs. Vanstone: I should clarify the reason I stressed and emphasized several times that this presentation did not represent a consensus among Metro boards. It did not go before each area board for voting and approval. Our schedules just simply did not allow it. I do not see anything in this presentation that leaps out at me as being something that any one of the boards in Metro would disagree with.

My opinion on the grade versus social promotion has been that I agree with what we have said here. I think it is a red herring. I think what the boards are saying, and this comes out in the York presentation as well, is that we know from the statistics that so-called failing a child has some impact on what happens later, some detrimental impact, so we are trying to look at other ways.

Perhaps what we are saying is that now we want to focus more clearly on what a child has learned in those early years. Those are critical years. The chairman of the York board read an additional part because she wanted to stress our commitment to the early years. We recognize that they are very important years. The government clearly recognizes it by doing the class size thing in grades 1 and 2. I think most of us would prefer to regard grades 1, 2 and 3 as the critical unit. The class size thing alone is not going to do it. This is why we talked over and over again here about giving the teachers the skills to use that situation. Just reducing the class size is not going to do it.

I do not know if any of the rest of the trustees want to enlarge on that, but I think that probably on grade and social promotion we are not at different places. We feel very strongly that those early years are important and we have to ensure that the kids get the skills they need and the tools they need to apply later than that.

Mrs. Williams: I would simply add to that by saying we do not fail children regularly because we see the detrimental side of that. However, each child is looked at individually and it may be in some children's best interest to repeat information, but I would say that is a rare occasion and is done in consultation with educational people and the parents in the home, because there are a lot of things that come into a child's failure and how the child sees himself. Would it be better if the child went on and had extra help in that next classroom? Each thing, I believe, is individual.

Mr. Maxsted: I was just thinking, Richard, when you were talking, that I was held back in grade 4 and I could not say "pedagogical preparedness to teach heterogeneous groups."

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Grade 4?

Mr. Maxsted: Yes. So I am all for social promotion.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We were earlier getting more of a consensus in the way you are talking. Yesterday was the first time I had heard the case put very strongly against social promotion. That is why I wanted to see if there was unanimity within the Metro system. There seems to be a general consensus.

Mrs. Vanstone: But we are emphasizing giving those tools and ensuring the kids have them.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think both sides of the issue do on that one.

The last question I would ask is around the streaming question. Again, one of our difficulties there is one of definition. My own sense of what we have to talk about with streaming is a combination of the two things that you say are two ways of looking at it. I think you have to combine the notion of ability groupings plus the notion of the question of homogeneity or heterogeneity of class structure. Nobody is saying there are not different abilities. Within a heterogeneous class in an elementary panel you are clearly going to have little groupings set up, but there is a lot more transfer back and forth than there is if a kid goes off to a basic-level high school. Their chances of then making it into an academic high school at some point are infinitesimal. From my concept of what we are talking about, I am linking the two things.

I know that in the city of Toronto there have been studies done about the inner-city schools around the socioeconomic question of where those kids go. In the last one, in 1979 or whenever it was you did it, it showed a very large percentage of the kids from the Regent Park area, for instance, being streamed into the vocational at that stage. Has there been any follow-up done across Metro in terms of gathering information about who is going into the basic stream, if I can put it that way? Do we get a reinforcement of this socioeconomic determinant, if I can put it that way, rather than some of the other factors? That is of major concern to me. Most of the boards I ask this question of do not have any real information about it, unfortunately.

Mrs. Vanstone: The Toronto board, I believe, has done a subsequent study to the 1979

one, in about 1984. I do not know about the others. There has not been a Metro-wide study on it. Have any of the other boards in Metro done a tracking on that? No; I am seeing a no.

I would point out, however, that you have made a comment on the segregated schools. The fact of the matter is that the city of Toronto, which does have basic-level schools, has a much lower dropout rate than the provincial average. There is a better retention factor in basic-level schools for those kids than for basic-level students in composite schools in other parts of the province. As far as dropouts go, that seems to be a better retention.

1100

Mr. Moll: I would also make a couple of comments on the issue of streaming. First, students are not streamed by the schools. Toronto students are free to attend any school the student wishes to attend, provided there is physical room in the school; that is, provided they have been promoted. Many students who would enter a basic-level course are not entitled to promotion out of grade 8, but rather than remain behind that year may elect to proceed into a basic-level course.

As well, while I think most of the schools in Metro have a fairly highly specialized secondary school system, certainly within the Toronto Board of Education every secondary school offers subjects at more than one level. Many of them offer them at three levels. While they may concentrate or have a preponderance at one particular level, there is a sampling available.

We also have statistics which would show that in any one year there is about a 10 per cent movement within the student population from one level to another level. Actually, that would be slightly contrary to what is in the presentation here, where it says it is more difficult—and it is more difficult—to move from general to advanced or basic to general, but our statistics would show that the movement is relatively even between basic to general as both general to advanced and advanced to general.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That would have been my final question, on any tracking done in terms of upward mobility within the board. Any statistics you have I think the committee would really appreciate receiving.

Mr. Moll: Those statistics are a couple of years old, but I will get them for you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They would still be very interesting to see, and if other boards have a similar kind of information from that kind of

tracking, I would certainly be interested in seeing it.

I know other members will ask for comments around transitional courses, which you did not emphasize very much. I am sure somebody else is going to ask that question so I will not have to. Thank you, Madam Chairman. You have been very patient again.

Madam Chairman: As usual, Mr. Johnston. I just wanted to comment—my mind has just gone to mush so I will not make my comment until I remember what it was.

Mrs. O'Neill: I usually can accommodate Mr. Johnston. Actually, I was going to continue his line of questioning, but I am not going to ask the question he wants me to.

If I may start, I just want to get the background to the exhibits. Are they the groundwork for the actual brief? Is that the way that has been put together?

Mrs. Vanstone: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is what the individual boards submitted.

Mrs. Vanstone: The only ones that are a little different are the English-as-a-second-language statistics on the last page, but that sort of refers to the context. It is really nice to be able to think "philosophy of education," but when you are an operating board and you hit a sudden crisis, as we have hit in this area, you tend to be scrambling to deal with the crisis, with that situation.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you for providing that sheet. I would like to go to page 22. This is similar to Mr. Johnston's line of questioning, but I want to go to the entry point from grade 8 to grade 9. It seems, if I read that correctly, that the research you have and the research you have used to make your decisions does seem to favour social promotion at that level. We had presentations yesterday that I felt intimidated there might even be, as well, quite a few demissions from special education at that point to go into a basic-level program. I wonder if you could say a little more about this. Is this usually at the basic level and do you feel your research backs up this move rather than a retention in the intermediate school?

Mrs. Vanstone: I think we will ask Mr. Hodgins, whose staff from the York board prepared this paper, to respond to that.

Madam Chairman: Would you also identify yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard and then begin.

Mr. Hodgins: Daryl Hodgins, superintendent of program, Board of Education for the City of York.

Our research was based on three major studies. It does support the context of your question, that the major movement has been into the lower-level courses, I think the point that Mr. Moll made a few minutes ago was that one of the admission criteria for the basic-level schools has been a lack of success in the academic programs in the elementary schools, so that it is certainly between grades 8 and 9 that it becomes visible.

The overall impact, though, of the literacy problems in the lower grades of elementary school was supported by three major studies, which we could let the committee have if you wished, Madam Chairman. One is by Alfred Hess, Jr. and James Greer, in Chicago, called *Categorizing, Sorting and Bending Twigs: Elementary School Influences on Dropping Out*. It is a 1988 study on a region similar to Metropolitan Toronto and has some very significant analyses in it. There is also a 1979 report in the city of New York and a more recent paper in the North York Board of Education on influences on dropping out. They all support that lack of success in the elementary grades as a major criterion.

Mrs. O'Neill: I have to be very specific because I think you really are at a crunch in this decision-making for your students in conjunction with their parents. You are suggesting, then, that where there is a lack of success, it is much better to promote the students rather than, as we say at the other end of the spectrum in grade 13, to let them try again to raise their marks so they may go into a general- or advanced-level program. Your paper seemed to support the view that it would be better not to do that and to put them into basic—and I do not think you attended to my question about the demissions from special education.

Mr. Hodgins: I am not sure. Perhaps I misunderstood the question. Could you restate it?

Mrs. O'Neill: If you go to the first one then, I will go to the special ed one. I just want to be very clear that your research proves or supports that rather than retain to upgrade marks for entrance to a general-level or advanced program, your counselling is to go into high school basic-level programming, generally speaking. I presume there are exceptions to that.

Mr. Hodgins: That has been the practice in our system, yes.

Mrs. Vanstone: Perhaps one could add to it that children certainly have the opportunity to remain in grade 8. I think the thrust that the York board has made in this is, if you wait until the end

of grade 8—I was just conferring with the chairman of the Toronto board—the kids who are transferred into basic-level programs in grade 9 are at the end of grade 8—and this is a major criterion in the city of Toronto, and I imagine it is in the other boards—reading at the grade 4.8 level.

I think the thrust of the York brief, as I understood it, was to say that we should try to ensure that that does not happen. Certainly, I think the end of grade 8 is a little late to be focusing on that.

Mrs. O'Neill: So you are suggesting that those students who are being counselled in the manner in which you suggest have had a lot of supports, a lot of remediation and you feel they are reaching their potential, as the phrase goes, when the choice of a basic level is counselled?

Mrs. Williams: It is counselled in consultation with parents and teachers and a wealth of resource that has gone into that student. I am not saying we are saying, “You are going into basic,” but we are saying that, educationally, we feel that the best success for that student would be in a basic program.

Mr. Moll: If I might interject there as well, certainly from my position, I would feel that by the time a student is in grade 8 and is reading at a grade 4 level maybe, it is very late in the day to try to correct that situation. Hopefully, that is the best level that student can function at. Undoubtedly, there are a number of students who drop between the cracks. But the point of intervention—and that is one of the major criticisms I would have of the Radwanski report—is that it is trying to deal with the issue of dropouts at the wrong end of the spectrum.

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If a student is not properly equipped to enter high school by the end of grade 8, the likelihood of equipping that student for success in secondary school, the chance of success is significantly reduced. It is going to be much more costly than if the intervention is made before the end of the primary division. I agree with the chairman of the Metro school board. From my standpoint, if a student is not reading by the end of grade 3, serious intervention needs to be made at that point rather than at the end of the elementary school.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. We will leave that.

Madam Chairman: Mrs. O'Neill, we are fast running out of time. If you have a final question, could you keep it quite brief?

Mrs. O'Neill: I will leave that other point then and go to folio 23, if I may. You are talking about uniform standards of attainment and you say, “Schools must be held accountable.” Have you developed a mechanism, a system-wide or Metro-wide testing or evaluation process?

Mrs. Vanstone: There is no Metro-wide evaluation process. Each of the boards is in a different place, and they would have to speak to that themselves. I know the Toronto board's, because it happens to be my home board, but it is up to the chairman of the Toronto board to talk about the accountability measures for performance that it is doing. I do not know about the other boards. There is not a Metro-wide one, but Mr. Moll can talk about Toronto.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think I will let somebody else come in on it. I just wondered if you had a method for the accountability you referred to on folio 23. If it is going to take a long time to answer, I will certainly—

Mrs. Vanstone: I am sure Mr. Moll could, and we could ask each of the boards to forward to the committee what it is now doing. The Toronto board is embarking on a benchmark evaluation system. It has been written about quite a lot. That will be a very strong and new accountability measure. We could ask each of the boards to send that to you.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think that might be very helpful.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. I would also like to thank Mr. Hodgins for his generous offer to provide us with some of that research. In particular, I think the two recent ones would be very helpful to the committee.

Mr. Jackson: At the outset, let me thank you for the brief. You probably do not appreciate how good your brief is.

[Laughter]

Mr. Jackson: No, I am serious. If you had followed us around, a lot of groups have focused on one point and taken 20 pages to make the point. You have covered a lot of territory. I particularly appreciate your Ben Franklin checklist approach to semestering.

Mrs. Vanstone: It is very useful, is it not?

Mr. Jackson: Yes. I want to deal with two quick issues which have not been touched upon by the two previous questioners. On the issue of semestering, if we analyse your checklist, it tends to put itself more on the side that nonsemestered traditional schools should have a marginally higher value. Investigation and study

have indicated that it has a significant impact in grades 9 and 10.

We are asking questions all around this province about boards that are semestered wholesale. They just said it happened, or the teachers felt it was supportable, and when the teachers supported it, it worked. At some schools the teachers did not support it. That was the rationale as to why we do or do not have semestering. That concerned me greatly as a trustee and it concerns me now as a legislator. Yet you bottom-line this whole thing as, "Leave it to us, no mandated guidelines and allow for local autonomy."

What is the consensus among the boards? Is there a broad range between, say, a board within Metro that is all-semestered and a board that is very limited-semestered? The other question is that part of that would be with respect to how much at variance your policies are with respect to how you determine if you will convert to semestered or partial semestering, because we are also seeing inconsistencies of how we deal with the community in the transition to one from the other.

Mrs. Vanstone: You would have to ask each of the boards or perhaps one staff person to answer that. I think, categorically, each of the boards has some semestered programs.

Mrs. Williams: Some partially semestered programs.

Mrs. Vanstone: Some partially semestered programs. Maybe all of the boards have trim-estered programs. Toronto certainly does, remembering that in Metropolitan Toronto there are open boundaries, so there is that sort of thing. We could, for the sake of time, Mr. Jackson, possibly send the committee each way the board does it. Certainly my experience has been that there is extensive consultation with the community. If you want to keep your neck intact, you do that. It is a serious political question, in our view.

I have been relatively confident that there is not a student who does not have access to a semestered program, but I do recognize that in Metropolitan Toronto we are very much more fortunate than a community which may have one high school. They would have a considerably more difficult time with this. Can we send to the committee each board's policy on how it gets to semestering? Each would be different.

Mr. Jackson: That is an area of concern to me because it is the absence of consistent policies around this province which is one issue. From there we can go to analysing it.

Mrs. Vanstone: Sure.

Mr. Jackson: For example, has anybody studied a comparison of attendance, achievement levels and retention rates in the varying configurations? I realize that it is somewhat misleading to analyse from that point because you have different socioeconomic groups in the school areas, different commitments on the part of the supervision of the program and so on.

But I have asked the question in Ottawa. They seem willing to share the data with respect to those schools that are on the structured grade 9 and grade 10, and then the semestered grades 11, 12 and 13, in comparison with fully semestered schools. I think the data will reveal the fact that in all three areas there is some marginal, if not marked, improvement.

I am impatient that we get on with the business of looking at that. It is attendance because you have made that point on dropouts—and I wanted to thank Pat Hainer for, for whatever reason, including such a good presentation on dropouts; we did not ask for it but we are sure glad it is in there—that achievement levels can be measured.

Boards are rightly very nervous about comparing school A to school B. They do not have to be identified in that great a detail, but internally, certainly, we should be looking at that, because the basic thesis is that achievement levels would be higher. Then, of course, there are retention rates which you make in that point. If we cannot be more focused in terms of study in that area, boards can do that now.

Mrs. Vanstone: Yes. That is right. I am advised that there has been no cross-Metro research on this. Does anybody know if there has been individual board research looking at these various things? No, we do not know of any.

Carole, do you want to speak to this? This is Carole Olsen, our superintendent of human resources, Metro board. Carole probably knows about this.

Mrs. Olsen: With respect to semestering, we have found that there is probably some form of semestering in virtually all of our approximately 100 secondary schools across Metropolitan Toronto. In fact, in consultation with one of my colleagues, we are saying that we probably cannot offer the programs in the variety of credits that should be available to students at the senior division unless we have some form of semestering.

What the committee might want to consider is looking at the grouping that you are talking about for attendance purposes in grade 9 and grade 10. The grouping, I think, can still have students

identified with a class and be in some form of a semestered program. Also, I think that many of our schools are finding, although we do not have cross-Metro research with respect to this, that for the students in grade 9 and grade 10, less semestering, the longer period of teaching a subject over the course of a year and the identity that is established if you can get a home-room group of students moving together are more advantageous in terms of lowering that dropout rate.

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Mr. Jackson: I do not wish to respond to that. I would like to talk to you about the transition point between grades 8 and 9 and the degree to which we have warranted or are able to monitor more clearly the achievement levels in math and English, to the extent we have studied that—and we know the range of students we are picking up who go into secondary school—how we are able to cope with them in a semestered environment and how better we would be able to cope with them in terms of remediation and tutoring and all the other stuff that can be applied in a traditional one-full-year whack at English and a one-full-year whack at math. We are getting compelling evidence that indicates we should be looking at this.

My final question, and I am trying to make it really brief, has to do with the very last yellow page. Those statistics are incredible.

Mrs. Vanstone: Are they not? Wait until you see this year's. I am told they are going to be even bigger. I would like to point out to you that in Metropolitan Toronto, it is the Metropolitan Toronto taxpayer who is paying for the whole shot here, and that is not really fair.

Mr. Jackson: The whole whack, yes. Even in Halton, we are seeing this coming forward. We are trying to convince our board to deal with the issue of the parents' ability to work with a student entering high school to assist or be part of or even be informed about the choices that the child is making about his credit selections when they do not speak any English whatsoever. We are struggling to get a program in place so that those families will be part of the decision-making process and the awareness, and it is very difficult. We have identified the language areas that we have to address. It is through the English-as-a-second-language teachers.

What are you doing in your boards to deal with this issue? What are your problems in terms of funding with respect to this? This is an extremely expensive prospect, but we now know, having identified the process, how big a problem you are

going to have five years from now as these kids come through the system without the parental influence.

It is not the east Europeans who are just driving their kids to achievement. This is a different type of immigration, a different type of thought process, as it has been explained to me by the ESL teachers, who have been involved in this area for the last 15 or 20 years. We have serious problems coming unless we get the parents involved in the loop, and language is the barrier.

Mrs. Vanstone: Specific to that part of it, I commend to you a recent report, and we can arrange to have it sent, that the North York Board of Education did, and a similar report that the Toronto Board of Education did in addressing this problem. We have a new dimension here, and it has to be looked at.

I will be quite frank with you that the magnitude of the increase in teachers of English to speakers of other languages was not really identified until quite recently, last year. We have had to put an enormous number of teachers in place.

There are other edges to it, as you say, that I do not think we have come to grips with yet, because we are dealing with the practicality of the problem itself rather than the long-range stuff. But reading what both the North York board and the Toronto board have recently done—and I do not know whether other boards have been into this; I happen to know of those two—I think those would be very good things for you to look at, because it is going to have to be handled differently. It is just that simple.

Mr. Jackson: In conclusion, the compelling argument that one group made was that by limiting the number of options and insisting that students work to a high achievement level or challenge in grades 9 and 10 helps to put the student on track. I have to bring in your comment, which I appreciated deeply, that given the easy route, to drop down in terms of a challenge, it is always the route that kids will take.

Young people will take the path of least resistance. Somehow we have structured our schools to mitigate against motivating and promoting kids. When you eliminate the parental influence, you structure your school in such a way that the students can take an easy path, overcrowded classrooms so that the teacher cannot catch it and overtaxed guidance counsellors to motivate.

In conclusion, I want to thank you. I have a report from a teacher struggling with a sense of

vision in my board. I would love to send you a copy of it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: To be fair, we should send one back.

Mrs. Vanstone: Recognize that when we talked about the dropout pattern, the alarm bell that was going off in my mind all the time was this yellow page, because it is all very well to talk about focusing in the primary years, and that is really important, but when you get a kid who is 11 years old, possibly a refugee child, who has had no schooling in any language and possibly has suffered quite a lot, you have a lot of facets of that child's education that you have to deal with.

Mr. Jackson: It is like grandfathering a child's education, saying to all that group: "Well, we can't help you. We're going to focus on this new group." We have a commitment to those other kids and to get on with it right away.

Mrs. Vanstone: We have to look after that. I think both of those reports I commended to you do address that situation.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You are really relieving the ministry. I usually ask them for several reports a day, but now that we have this many, I cannot ask them for anything more.

Mr. Moll: I am going to throw in one last comment here on that very issue. You mentioned family involvement; certainly the Toronto English-as-a-second-language report does speak a great deal about the involvement of the family and family reception centres, particularly for refugee children. However, while I think the report is an excellent one, the only thing that prevents it from coming to fruition is the absence of money.

Mr. Jackson: I slipped that in. I am glad you caught it.

Mr. Moll: Yes; and I will say this quite plainly again: Provincial government grants to the Metro board of education, for instance in capping grades 1 and 2, which in fact they provide the money with one hand and simply increase the deficit of grants to the ordinary expenditures and produce a negative figure at the bottom. Those are not useful in doing anything.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They are useful to the Treasurer (Mr. R. F. Nixon).

Mr. Moll: They may be useful in saying that we have now solved the problem, but it certainly does not help us, the people who are actually charged with delivering the service. It does not help us one jot in delivering the service.

Mr. Jackson: You should be telling the Ministry of Skills Development. They are the ones who have all the money.

Mrs. Williams: Also, the resources are not just teachers in this; there are community liaison officers who speak several languages, consultation with the home, bringing these people in and time involvement. There are all kinds of things on top of the teachers in the classroom.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What is your bottom line on these figures for the ESL?

Mrs. Vanstone: We could not tell you what the bottom line was. We can know from these statistics how many teachers we have to put into the schools, but each board will determine what social services to put in place and what translators to put in place. All of that would be done individually by boards. In the face of what is going on in this, I think we are rapidly going to have to put together some bottom-line statistics.

Mr. Moll: I think that as far as the Toronto report is concerned, there are ballpark figures that it would take to implement the report; it is several millions of dollars.

Madam Chairman: One last point perhaps before you go. I know that Mr. Johnston, when he was at the end of his questioning, mentioned transition programs. Normally, we do not go back to members for questions when we are through, but I think this is a point that is very germane to our discussion since we have been hearing a lot about the difficulty of movement from one stream level to the other. Mr. Johnston, if I am not asking the right question, please correct me. What type of programs do they have in Metro Toronto to try to assist students in movement from the basic level to general, general to advanced?

Mrs. Vanstone: Again, that would happen differently in different boards. Once again, because we really are a group of operating boards sitting here, what we would have to do would be to go through it for each board. If you want to conserve time here, I would see that each board sent to you in a package what interventions they use at the transitional level. Would that help? You might like to have it in writing in any case.

Madam Chairman: Do all boards have transition programs?

Mrs. Vanstone: They would be doing something of some sort. Certainly, there are transitional-type programs, especially in schools that are mainly basic-level programs, in the city of Toronto; there would have to be in the other boards. There may be some special remediation,

for example, between grade 8 and grade 9. There may be summer work done in each board. There would be a number of strategies that may be similar but may differ from board to board. I think what would be best to do would be to put those together and send them to your committee board by board. Would that be useful?

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: The distinction, though, that was made by another group was that OSIS generated problems in terms of lack of curriculum.

Mrs. Vanstone: Oh, did it ever.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Transition programs, in that sense, to allow the student to move from basic to another program—there were just very few guidelines around. There is very little assistance.

Mrs. Vanstone: No textbooks, no guidance whatsoever.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Any comments on that side of things about how you try to cope with that would be also useful for us to have a look at.

Mrs. Vanstone: Okay. That would be terrific.

I just got some figures on the English-as-a-second-language thing on just the teachers in Metro, 150 to 200 additional this year. Carole has an average salary of \$40,000, but actually the cost to the boards, which I think we have used before, is \$50,000. So it is \$50,000 times 200, just for the teachers, not taking into account all the things Trustee Williams mentioned. It is very costly; the other stuff is too.

We will get a bottom line on that, but it is going to take us a while. I think we are going to need it because of the dimension of the problem.

Thank you very much. This has been interesting for us.

Madam Chairman: It has certainly been interesting for us. Thank you, Mrs. Vanstone. I think the Ministry of Education also thanks you. You have relieved the necessity for them to pile on more statistics for Mr. Johnston today, so you have given them a bit of a break. I would like to thank again the Metropolitan Toronto School Board for the excellent presentation.

Mr. Maxted: We are putting three school boards together to take you on.

Mrs. Vanstone: Three school trustee associations. We are having one—we are doing it this weekend—so we will be strong.

Madam Chairman: Sure.

I ask the presenters from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education to please come forward.

Welcome to our presenters from OISE. We are glad to see you and look forward to your sharing information with us. I think, as Mr. Johnston just pointed out, you have made his day because he can now ask for research from OISE as well as from the Metropolitan Toronto School Board and the ministry.

Mrs. O'Neill: I think you are being very hard on him.

Madam Chairman: I am just getting back at Mr. Johnston for being so hard on me over the days.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You ain't seen nothin' yet.

Madam Chairman: Oh, dear. Welcome to our committee. We apologize. We are running slightly behind time, but once we get into these stimulating discussions, we hate to end them so soon. Please identify yourself for the purpose of electronic Hansard. We have allowed one hour for your brief, including questions from the members. If you would allow plenty of time for questions, we would most appreciate it. Please begin whenever you are ready.

ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

Mr. Pitman: I am very pleased indeed to return to the committee at a time when you are now dealing with specifics of policy. I am especially pleased to bring along three of my colleagues, whom I will identify as Professors Ken Leithwood, Steve Lawton and Andy Hargreaves, moving from right to left.

We have, as you know, prepared for this committee—and we hope you will be able to attend, realizing just how busy you are—an invitational workshop at OISE on October 15 and 16. We have already heard from one or two of your members that you are coming and we are very pleased to hear that you are taking part in this process.

I simply pass right now to Professor Leithwood.

Dr. Leithwood: We have prepared a paper to present to the committee, which is being typed even as we speak. What you have in front of you is a set of summary recommendations concerning the kinds of issues we raise in the paper itself, which will be forwarded to you in the next week or so.

Our presentation this morning will consist of a review of six recommendations which we believe are supportable, outlining the reasons we offer for these recommendations. We will allude to the

evidence we provide in the longer paper for each of our reasons, but will have to allude to that very briefly.

By way of introduction, we have taken your policy interests as we understand them and looked at them perhaps from a somewhat different perspective than what we heard this morning, at least. In the research evidence we consider in the longer paper, I think we have touched on what we know of which is relevant to those policy issues.

We are going to divide our comments and keep them to about 20 to 25 minutes. I will deal with the first couple of recommendations in our summary, then I will pass it over to Professor Lawton to deal with the third, Professor Hargreaves to deal with the fourth and fifth, and I will come back and conclude with the sixth.

Let me begin by going right to our first recommendation; that is that decisions concerning the means of education—many of the things we heard you discussing this morning, for example—should, in our view, more often be made at the school and school level than at the provincial level.

We offer three reasons for this recommendation. The first is that we believe local educators are well trained to make these decisions to begin with, and we provide some evidence about the level of training available at the school and school district level at the present time. For example, about 82 per cent of supervisory officers have either master or doctoral degrees, most in education; roughly 70 per cent of school principals in Ontario have master or doctoral degrees.

Our second reason for advocating more local decision-making I think concerns the dilemma you were facing this morning in your discussions of promotion policies, frankly; we raise that as a line of evidence in support of this second reason. The choice of best practices depends on knowledge of the particular context in which those practices are to be played out as much as it does to general knowledge that might come out of a body of research.

For example, the evidence in the research literature on social promotion clearly supports the value of social promotion, but it does not take into account a whole other line of evidence concerning the effects of mastery learning strategies, which essentially require students to master the content they are faced with before proceeding on or substantial deficits in learning will accumulate over the course of their school careers. I think those two bodies of conflicting

evidence are best resolved at the local level, looking at individual children and how they will respond themselves to various promotion alternatives.

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Our third reason here concerns the need to recognize local diversity and the difficulty of doing that with much provincial-level policy-making. The case we use as an example there is OSIS, in particular some of the regulations contained in OSIS for providing different levels of courses and a very wide variety of courses, which in effect legislate incompetence for those in small schools; it is a policy designed to be implemented in large schools. On the other hand, we do know, for example, on the basis of research evidence, that small schools are generally more effective than large schools. We think some of the decisions which have been made, for example, in OSIS for the province as a whole might better be made at the system or school level.

Our second recommendation goes back to an issue which I guess was on your agenda when you first started your discussions, and that concerns the goals of education. We do not say much in detail about those, but we do recommend that the general goals of education should be determined at the provincial level. They should encourage a broad and balanced education for everyone, in our view.

Our reasons here are fourfold. First, we think all students are entitled to that kind of broad education. The second reason we offer has to do with the difficulty of compartmentalizing human experience, for example, focusing in schools on one aspect of that experience, perhaps the intellectual life of the student, and not taking into account their social life and other aspects of that experience. It makes schools additionally artificial beyond what they are at the present to try to do that.

In addition, we think this recommendation is supported by the notion that restricted goals for some students dramatically influence their motivation to achieve. For example, a restricted focus on academics for students whose talents lie elsewhere essentially sentences them to a school experience of failure, a tendency to avoid school when possible and probably eventually to an increased tendency to drop out.

As a kind of addendum to that, we point out that motivation is infectious. Once students start to feel some success in school, they begin to be motivated by that school experience. The range

of experiences they are likely to be motivated to deal with is likely to grow as well.

Let me ask Professor Lawton if he would pick up the third recommendation.

Dr. Lawton: The third one follows the other two in moving towards the school level and school board level, saying that policies concerning specific objectives are best developed at the school and school board level. In providing the argument for this, what I wanted to do was to cast a rather broad net, because the key here is what I would call responsiveness at the school level to the particular policy demands in that particular community. As we heard this morning with some of the statistics on English as a second language, the demographics and some of the broader situations impacting upon schools are very important.

I brought some beautiful overheads to show you and there is no overhead projector. I did some contingency planning, though, and I have some handouts here of the overheads. I would have given them earlier, but I was not certain of the procedures here. Some of this work I have taken from David Foot, who presented a paper at a conference we organized on the price of quality education earlier this year. He is an economist demographer at the University of Toronto.

The first two pictures here show something you are probably familiar with—I do not know whether the committee has dealt with it at this point in time—the changing age distribution in Canada. In this age pyramid demonstrated in figure 1, the dark line shows the age distribution as of 1971, with the females on the right side, males on the left side; the bulge is the baby boom. Following the baby boom, of course, was the baby bust and that shows the falling in of the pyramid at the bottom. Figure 2 shows what is happening currently in Ontario 1986; not quite currently. You can see there is the beginning of a widening at the base again, which is the echo of the baby boom and is already probably halfway finished. It will probably end by the early 1990s.

The point of this is that we are going through a drought period in terms of adolescents entering our high schools and new entries to the labour market. The labour market, which grew around three per cent during the 1970s, is now growing at about only 1.6 per cent, I think, according to Foot's figures. There is a shortage of new entrants to the labour market. This, of course, especially impacts or can impact our secondary schools.

The impact on enrolment is shown in figure 5; these, again, are probably familiar to you. It

shows essentially the enrolments at the different grade levels. As you know, primary enrolments are picking up now even though secondary enrolments are declining. Secondary enrolments will continue to decline until the early to mid 1990s. At that point, the current echo of the baby boom will again put new entrants into the high schools. We are going through this state of flux where we are sort of booming again at the elementary level while the drought is, of course, affecting secondary schools.

One issue has been youth unemployment, and Foot presents some interesting figures here. He shows in figure 6 the rapid drop which is occurring of youth unemployment as a percentage of total employment. Even though we focus on youth unemployment—that is to say, youths between the ages of 16 and 24 are more likely to be unemployed than any other group—they are forming, because of the baby bust, a smaller percentage of the people who are unemployed than they have at virtually any time in the past. The unemployment problem is not really with youth any more; it is now with the baby-boom generation, those between roughly 24 and 44 years of age.

I will not go through tables 1 and 2 in detail—there are too many numbers there—but the gist of them is to demonstrate just what I have said, that the unemployment problem is now a young adult problem, no longer a youth problem.

How does this impact on the secondary schools? We have just done a study, funded by the Ministry of Education, looking at student retention in high schools, looking at what schools and school boards can do. One of the things we did was to count dropouts and the next overhead shows how we counted dropouts. One important point I put here—again, not going through it in detail—is that we looked at annual rates of dropouts. To us, these are the policy-important dropout rates. A cohort rate, which may be 30 or 40 per cent, takes seven years to calculate. We will not know until 1993 what the dropout rate is for students entering high school this year. I do not think it is particularly useful to wait until 1993, so we focused on annual dropout rates.

We did seven site studies; it does not Xerox quite as well as it might. These are seven case studies we did and what has happened to the dropout rates over the last three years. I do not know how representative these are of the province but in these seven schools they had increased by an average of 50 per cent over the last three years. Our explanation for this is that in a booming economy, with the smaller number of

new entrants to the labour force, many adolescents are being sucked out of the schools into the economy.

Dropout rates, at least in this sample of schools, were increasing quite rapidly. The first school, school 1, was a comprehensive school. It has shown little change, but if you come over to the school 7 comprehensive schools—we found the dropout rate was increasing most rapidly in comprehensive schools. We found it was more stable or declining in schools which seemed to be most responsive to their communities, which seemed to be able to read the situation and to respond by developing appropriate goals and policies for their schools, which would respond to keeping the students in school by making those schools more attractive to the youth; sort of a push and pull. They made school so attractive that it would help to keep the students in school.

This is the sort of rationale, why we see it is important to have this sort of policy decision-making at the local level, especially the school level.

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In terms of background, the final chart here—I do not have comparable Canadian data; one page just shows the source of it—is what is happening to the average income levels of youths entering the labour market, especially dropouts, from the United States. The gist of what it shows here is that for males—the data were only on males—entering the labour force, their income in 1986 had declined on the order of 25 per cent to 40 per cent from what it had been a decade and a half ago.

The point is that there has been a polarization, so to speak, in the rates of pay at different types of jobs. Many youths going out on the jobs are, in terms of constant dollars, earning far less than they did a decade and a half ago in the United States. It is particularly true with minority groups. They will not be able to form new families, because they cannot afford to support them.

The prognosis for them, of course, with the first downturn in the economy is that they will join the unemployed and add to the unemployment of young adults I was talking about. One of the implications of this ultimately is increased demand for adult education among both the young adults and those who leave school now because of the booming economy.

I know that has been a rather broad scope, but I think it might be useful to you. Perhaps Dr. Hargreaves can continue.

Dr. Hargreaves: Having recently arrived in Canada from England, as you will guess by the accent, I find it almost refreshing to be involved in a discussion of the educational problems caused by a booming economy. What I want to do is to address recommendations 4 and 5. Both of these really address the question of the relationship between the goals of education and their implications for school organization.

I think that in particular they address the question of the relationship between educational goals advocating a broad and balanced education for all children and the implications of such goals for two particular areas of school organization, one of which is pupil grouping—streaming or unstreaming, as we might think of it—and the other is policies on educational assessment. What I would like to do is to address each of those in turn.

On the issue of streaming, which I know you have already debated at some length this morning, we would want to make the following observations. First, streaming seems to us inconsistent with educational goals which support and promote a broad and balanced education for all pupils. To say that different forms of achievement are equally worth while and then to group pupils according to one dimension of achievement only seems to us educationally inconsistent.

Second, we find it is common for pupils to be streamed not only on their measured academic ability, but also, particularly through teachers and counsellors, according to their behaviour and motivation. Streaming in this sense can often turn out to be discriminatory and unfair.

Third, streaming results in fewer educational resources often being available to those who need them most, be these financial resources or staff resources, in terms of teacher qualification and so on.

Fourth, the evidence summed up in Jeannie Oakes's book, *On Keeping Track*, shows overwhelmingly that streaming creates lowered self-esteem among slow-streamed students, which in turn creates the conditions for increased truancy, dropout and a culture of cutting school. This low self-esteem, we would want to add, is not just a reflection of the home background influences on low-streamed students, but the very same findings have emerged even where students in select schools—academically able students, that is—have been streamed and differentiated.

Fifth, streaming prematurely locks students into programs which may not be appropriate for them later and from which it is difficult to escape.

Because streams are meant to cater for pupils with different needs, the gap in the programs between different streams quickly widens—that is the very rationale of streaming—therefore making transfer and flexibility during the student's career improbable. It means that changes in streaming, changes in allocation to streams are more common downwards from high to low than they are upwards from low to high.

For these reasons, if there are to be provincially determined policies concerning streaming, be these mandatory or advisory, we recommend that schools be unstreamed until and including grade 10 and that flexible course-by-course groupings be used rather than rigid streaming beyond that point.

In addition, however, we also acknowledge, in line with the findings of educational research, that unstreaming itself will create little improvement unless teachers can change and adapt their teaching styles to the wide needs of mixed-ability classes. We therefore additionally recommend that any policy on unstreaming be accompanied by professional development programs for school staffs to help and support them in learning, adapting and managing the new approaches to instruction that are required for mixed-ability teaching.

That is what we have to say about streaming. Our other major recommendation in this area is about assessment.

1. An important educational principle that we need to acknowledge here is that the assessment tail very often wags the curriculum dog. Assessment is therefore a key feature of educational policy. It shapes the curriculum as much as it reflects it.

2. Educational goals promoting a broad range of educational outcomes must therefore, we feel, be reflected in an equally broad assessment policy.

3. Caution should, however, be exercised regarding any form of assessment having an undue emphasis on what is learned and taught in schools. For this reason, we would recommend that whatever is decided regarding standardized testing, for instance, it be administered on a sample basis to check on baselines of standards rather than on a school-by-school basis, in such a way that it might provide a basis for comparison and competition around a restricted range of educational outcomes for those schools.

4. Assessment and reporting are ways of recognizing achievement, hence they influence student motivation to learn. Grade and test scores assess and record only a narrow range of what

students achieve in and out of school. They focus overwhelmingly on intellectual achievement and pay very little attention to practical, personal and social achievements, for instance.

School reports commonly suffer from similar drawbacks, providing parents, employers and the students themselves with minimal information about how they have responded to their school experience. Too many students leave school with very little to show for their efforts.

5. That relates to an important point that Professor Leithwood raised earlier on—that is the principle of motivation being infectious. If we wish to enhance ways in which pupils feel and have a sense of achievement in school, including and beyond the academic domain, then we need to find systems of assessment that can record, report and recognize that, and also—the tail wagging the dog—stimulate attention being paid to those other forms of assessment within the school curriculum.

As a result of all those forms of reasoning, we therefore recommend that if there are to be provincially determined goals concerning student assessment and if educational goals are aimed at fostering a broad range of outcomes for all students, those goals must be reflected in procedures for assessing and reporting student achievement.

More specifically, we recommend that all students be provided with a detailed and extensive record of achievement on leaving school, which in addition to grade and test scores, documents in written form the full range of a student's educational achievements inside and outside school in a way that can be presented to employers and other users beyond them.

To support the provision of such a record, we would also recommend the institution of a process of periodic one-to-one review of progress between students and their teachers—certainly their home-base teachers—over the course of their school career, where information about such achievements can be collected and where awareness of the need to produce such achievements can be stimulated among students and teachers alike.

We feel that an assessment policy of this kind will encourage and support breadth and balance in the curriculum for all pupils, that it will recognize a wider range of achievements than is currently recognized in schools and that, because of those two things, it will reduce disaffection and dropouts from school among those who have previously had very little to gain from it.

Now back to Professor Leithwood for our final recommendation.

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Dr. Leithwood: This is more than the token recommendation we would expect you to expect from us, although we do differ somewhat in terms of the degree to which we are concerned about what we call here "fundamental dismantling and/or restructuring of the organization of education." We debated whether the word "radical" ought to be in there or not and finally removed it.

Essentially, this recommendation asks the question, are we in fact engaged in a process of trying to deal with a problem that we have right now which involves us in simply doing the same thing we have always been doing, only doing it harder? If that is what we are about, is that really going to solve the problem, the problem being, in our view, meeting the needs of the nonuniversity-bound student, as a minimum?

I suppose our conclusion is that the current structure of the secondary school, in particular, creates such boundaries around the possibilities of doing that, responding in some sort of meaningful way to their needs, that maybe we ought to be less concerned about whether to stream or not to stream, whether to have semestered or nonsemestered schools, whether to have modified programs for kids of one level of ability or another. It is kind of beside the point. Perhaps all we can hope to accomplish by fiddling with policies like that are marginal changes among some students in their willingness to stay in school a little bit longer and perhaps in what they learn while they are there.

Posing the question in that way is something we think warrants thinking more about—how schools could be organized, whether there ought to be things we call "schools" available to young people beyond perhaps grade 10. Ought we not to be thinking about expanding the array of alternative educational experiences available to people at that time, perhaps getting some of those resources from what we currently spend on secondary schools and making available to them options that are offered at the present time in modest ways, like adult learning centres, and perhaps options that we have yet to think of involving experiences, organizations to provide those experiences, that are far different from secondary schools at the present time?

We are purposely somewhat vague about what the solution should be on this. We think the question is worth raising and I guess we feel somewhat pessimistic about the possibility of

seriously attending to the needs of students beyond grade 10 who do not have traditional academic goals in mind within our current structures.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. I must say when you were going into your first recommendation I had feelings of *déjà vu*. I was just waiting for you to spring the words "local option and Sunday shopping" at any given moment, particularly when I read reason 3, "Provincial-level decisions cannot adequately recognize the effects of local diversity." I thought, "Somebody has been helping with our policy book."

Anyway, I think we have a number of questioners. We will start off with Mr. Reycraft, followed by Mr. Johnston.

Mr. Reycraft: I want to address my question to Dr. Hargreaves and to ask him about recommendations concerning streaming. You talk about changing to a flexible, course-by-course grouping system instead of one of rigid streaming. I do not perceive the existing system to be one of rigid streaming. How much different from what we have now is this flexible, course-by-course grouping system that you envision?

Dr. Hargreaves: As I understand it, there is actually high variation between schools and systems in the exact form streaming takes. In some cases, the insulation among general, advanced and basic programs is quite tight and complete. In other cases, I understand that it is considerably more flexible, and people may take courses, some of which are advanced, some of which are general and so on.

I think what we are trying to draw attention to in the report is the form these different options take, and the dangers of clustering students together so that they take most of their courses, or all of their courses, within one particular track.

We even worry, I guess, about the labels "advanced," "general" and "basic" that attach to courses so that even if you opt for a range of individual courses, and when they cluster together they add up to advanced in a way that is recognized, that may have the same sorts of effects as taking a tightly insulated program.

I guess the sorts of things we are discussing are that courses are taken which do not necessarily have advanced, general and basic designations attached to them. I do not know if that is helpful to you.

Mr. Reycraft: Some courses are offered at only one level of difficulty in most, if not all, secondary schools. That is certainly not true of

what are conceived to be core subjects, but it is of some.

The system we have basically allows students to select courses at whatever level of difficulty they wish, and they do not have to select all of their subjects from the same level of difficulty. The only restrictions that apply to that are some courses which may have prerequisite courses attached to them. It is also true of students who are not promoted from grade 8, but are offered and accept the option of transferring to the secondary panel, provided they enter basic-level subjects. But once in there, there is no restriction that prevents those students from selecting general-level courses in subsequent years.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: What about kids who go to basic-level schools?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: And all the advice they get from teachers and guidance counsellors; those are pretty restrictive.

Mr. Reycraft: I would like to respond to some of those questions, Madam Chairman, but I know you would not let me, so I will not attempt to do so. Is it not appropriate that we have that kind of system where students are free to make their own choices?

Dr. Hargreaves: I think there are three observations I would make. One is that, clearly, members of the committee, among them, have a much greater knowledge of the diversity of Ontario provision than I do. The preferred patterns within those alternatives, I think, need to be looked at very carefully.

Second, if you do have, essentially, what is an option-choice system through forms of guidance, one needs to be very careful about the forms such guidance takes and whether pupils are often being steered into more advanced courses on the grounds of their ability, or also, additionally, on the grounds of behavioural and motivational factors.

I think the third point is that if courses are chosen, what courses are offered against them? I think if we move down from the high school level, for instance, to, say, junior intermediate, and we look at programs which may be grouped by ability within subjects, part of the problem you then find, for organizational reasons, is that if there is only one teacher available for that particular subject, say, for instance, French, then something has to be found to be set against it for that ability group.

Once you make decisions about grouping within, even within particular subjects and programs, that can often set up unintended consequences throughout a school where you

may have pupils being grouped in subjects like drama, physical education and so on as well. Choice sounds like an excellent principle to operate from, but the choice is mediated through advice, and choices have implications for other choices as well.

1210

Madam Chairman: Mr. Johnston, followed by Mr. Mahoney.

Interjection: Now you can answer your own question.

Madam Chairman: I am sure you have more than one, Mr. Johnston. You always do.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am sorry Mr. Reycraft did not answer it.

I found the statistics on employment figures that you gave us quite frightening, and those American statistics, their relationship to ours. Really, there are some huge challenges that lie before us, which brings me to the point we are looking at, what this committee is going to do next and the very strange role we have at the moment, dealing with things which are in fact in tandem with what the ministry is dealing with at the moment.

It puts us, as a select committee of the Legislature, in a kind of invidious position from time to time. I am beginning to wonder if in fact we should not be using the same information we are getting now as a base for our own education for then looking at where the education system should be going in the future.

If I look at the demographics you have put forward, in terms of employment and what might happen in the next downturn for a lot of very marginalized people who will be out there, if I look at the fact that our present system seems to be based on the notion that 65 per cent of our people will not go to post-secondary levels and if I look back at my high school level those many decades ago, what is it that I came out of high school with that actually prepared me for work, in terms of the courses?

Most of them had no relevance to my preparation for work at all. Therefore, the whole notion, which you then pose at the very end, of restructuring the secondary level, if we are going to say that is going to be the base of education, is a very important thing for us to look at without the confines of saying that we are throwing out OSIS tomorrow and that kind of thing, but looking at it much more futuristically, prompting me to think that maybe that is where this committee should be looking and not spending so much time in terms of doing ministry work, but

letting the ministry come forward with its recommendations and having a standing committee of the Legislature attack those things or help in having the public process.

I thank you for that input. But since we are now dealing with a report that we have to do on these other matters, I want to ask you a question which you raised essentially by saying that OSIS regulations at the moment legitimate incompetence in small schools.

Dr. Leithwood: They legislate.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Legislate; sorry, perhaps I do say "legislate." I cannot read my own writing. I did well in certain parts of reading and writing, but in not staying between the lines. I have never been good at staying between the lines, as Walter Pitman will tell you.

Mr. Reyecraft: You have verbal skills, I suppose.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: My verbal skills tend to be a bit excessive from time to time.

I wonder if you could comment further on that. It is interesting that we have not had representation yet from some of the smaller school boards to say that they feel OSIS is constraining them in that fashion.

Dr. Leithwood: I was referring to the professional staff when I used the term "legislating incompetence"; that is, creating a policy that is extraordinarily difficult to implement under some conditions faced by smaller school boards and schools outside the province. My allusion there was to some of the regulations contained in OSIS which strike me as being quite restrictive for people who work in small jurisdictions, in small schools. The irony, I think, for us in that is there is a considerable amount of evidence to support the claim that small schools and small systems, left to their own devices a little bit more, often do an excellent job of preparing students for a variety of different roles they might play out in their lives.

In this case, it seems to us that what we are doing is preventing them from taking advantage of the smallness, by creating a system provincially which demands bigness to be implemented well. That is a reason in defence of this notion. Actually, in the best interests of promoting equality of education across the province, we have taken that to mean legislating the same policies for all boards across the province. In fact, for some it is what we have called, in other places, a kind of fatal remedy; for some it has been of great advantage.

It seems to me that when you are in the business of legislating policy at a central level, this notion of concern for consistency across the system sometimes can run out of hand. Why do we need that amount of consistency? What we really want is a system that is as productive as possible for the folks who are going through it. If that means a lot of diversity in the policies that are governing the system at the local level, then we ought to have diversity and our provincial policy should provide for that diversity. That is the argument we are promoting here.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do you argue that OSIS allows for that diversity in a big system like Metro's, which was just here before us, but does not allow for that within a very small, one-school town?

Dr. Leithwood: Yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other thing I would like to know whether you have any information on is this whole question of the upward mobility of students out of the basic streams. The Toronto Board of Education today was suggesting that there was a 10 per cent movement, and it seems to be about equal, as it has noticed, between those going down and those coming up in the stream. I presume they meant since OSIS; I am not sure. Has OISE or anybody working there been gathering any information in terms of just what is the rigidity or fluidity of movement now that we have moved to this credit system versus the very, very strict old occupational classes, etc., in pre-OSIS days?

Dr. Leithwood: I do not think I can provide you with specific information about that.

Dr. Lawton: I presented some data here in those seven site schools, so I can speak about those seven site schools.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Can you give us an idea of what they were or where they were?

Dr. Lawton: One was in cottage country; the only high school in the town. Two were vocational schools in an urban setting; one male, one female. Two were comprehensive schools in the outlying Metro area, and two were within Metro; two academic high schools, collegiate institutes.

In the comprehensive schools, what we heard was that, first of all, there has been a trend among incoming students to select advanced in greater proportions than ever before. Two or three of the schools were quoting figures like, "We used to have maybe 40 per cent; now it is up to 60 or 70 per cent," coming in at grade 10, typically, although in one board it was grade 9, selecting

advanced. Then they said: "But by the time we get to grade 12, we have a reverse of that. We have 30 or 40 per cent in advanced and around 60 or 70 per cent in general." There tends to be a movement down. They are starting high and then phasing down. In none of the schools did we hear of a balanced phasing up and down.

In particular courses, they tend to phase down. Math and English are the two. Several schools we were in that were semestered had gone to traditional, year-long schedules for math and English because they perceived they met the needs of those students better.

In the two vocational schools, one of them had started to offer a couple of courses at the general level, but almost all the program was basic. They said they had lost some students since a few comprehensives had started offering basic courses. They indicated that many of their students would prefer to go to a comprehensive because they did not like the stigma of going to a vocational school.

They were proud of several people. I guess in one case there were two or three who had gone on after graduation from grade 12 into a regular school to earn a regular diploma, if you like. In one case, they reported that one of their girls had gone on to community college. But the overall picture was one of very little upward mobility. They considered success to be getting and holding a job, even if it was paying the minimum rate of pay.

Mr. Mahoney: On the streaming issue, it seems to me that in a certain sense even the statement you have made here that there should be course-by-course, flexible groupings beyond grade 10, in a sense, is contradictory to the reason you have given; that is, it is inconsistent with the goals of education. If it is inconsistent in grades 8, 9 and 10, it is equally inconsistent beyond that.

I wonder if there would be an outfall that would end up with almost reverse streaming once they get to the graduation level, where it is time to perhaps decide to go to university, to college or to work. Are the post-secondary institutions, particularly the universities, because of the fact that they are not dealing with a specific group of advanced students and are now dealing with the broader range, going to become more selective? Are they going to increase their entrance requirements and almost stream the kids retroactively when they get to that point?

1220

Dr. Hargreaves: If I could answer that first and then pass across to Steve Lawton, I feel what

we are saying about the goals of education is that there indeed ought to be a broad and balanced education for all students, but I think, as the nature of the third recommendation begins to make clear, and to some extent the fifth recommendation too, from a point after grade 10, then given the age of students at that point, given their developing maturity, given the different sorts of decisions they make from adolescents, there needs to be more acknowledgement at that stage of choice between courses, between schools and possibly even between different sorts of institutions. Perhaps, Stephen, that is something you would want to add to in relation to that point.

Dr. Lawton: Just going on from there, one of the facets we found was that students were essentially outgrowing the high school, particularly if they fell behind in credit accumulation. They might be 19 years of age, have 23 credits, all of their friends had already left and they were in an adolescent institution. Often, looking ahead, they saw no community college program they were linked to, so they did not even have a clear, set goal in terms of post-secondary education.

It seemed to us that in that situation, if some of the Ontario academic courses were available in community colleges so that they could move on to a community college to finish their grade 13, their OACs, they would have an institutional choice at that level rather than simply having to stay in the adolescent setting or, as some of them were doing, dropping out of school and then finishing up at night school or trying to finish up.

Mr. Mahoney: Sorry, but just for clarification, I was under the impression that secondary school studies are available at a number of the community colleges. Am I incorrect?

Dr. Lawton: The OACs? Am I right? I do not know; maybe I am wrong.

Mr. Mahoney: The example you just gave of a 19-year-old with 23 credits happens to be a young man I am very familiar with in dealing within my community. He is telling me he can go to Sheridan College to finish his high school diploma. I was just given that information last week. Does someone else have any information on that?

Mr. Reycraft: According to OSIS, the only person who can approve secondary credits is the secondary school principal. Community colleges can grant a certificate that indicates some kind of grade 12 equivalency, and that is one of the objectives of the Futures program, but the actual

credits towards the Ontario secondary school diploma can be awarded only by secondary schools.

Mr. Mahoney: Okay. Thanks for that clarification. I would tend to agree that perhaps that is an area we can look at as a modification.

Although you have not directly said it, you have talked about kids being prematurely locked in. I tend to agree that making a decision when you are 13 years old, especially if you are a first child and mum and dad, if you have a mum and dad around to talk to, are not too familiar with the system and are very often intimidated by it, that is much too early to be getting locked in.

There are ways to move. Certainly you can move down and there are ways to move up, but I have had the experience with my oldest son of moving him up and the difficulties of doing that.

Would you think that, rather than just simply moving the level from grade 9 to the end of grade 10, we might be better, more productive, to concentrate on smoother bridges, transition methods of making that change right from the start? Stream them into grade 9, but allow for periodic reviews with the educators and potential remedial work to upgrade, whether it is testing, whether it is evening courses, whether it is weekend additional courses or whether it is special courses within the school's structured day. Would that not seem like a reasonable alternative to your suggestion?

Dr. Hargreaves: I share your concern about students being prematurely locked into a system and making decisions at an age which may be inappropriate for them and from which they might find it difficult to escape.

I think the difficulty is that it is a catch-22, which is that if streaming is doing its work, if it is identifying abilities and looking at different needs and establishing very distinct programs in order to cater to those, then, naturally, because it is in the justification of streaming, those programs diverge over time.

Whatever the kind of counselling you have, it becomes harder and harder to move. I think the harder it becomes to move, the more important are differences in parental pressure that they can place on the schools. Some students from backgrounds with articulate parents may find upward movement easier than students from backgrounds which do not have those advantages. I think that is the concern I would have.

Mr. Mahoney: Just sort of supplementary to that, I came into this process of this committee, which has been a great education for me, with the

concept that streaming was wrong. I am gradually being turned around.

It seems to me that the later you stream, the more difficult it will be to change. Perhaps if streaming does start with better consultation at the earlier age, you will have an opportunity early to upgrade. If you want to change your stream in grade 12, it is likely going to be a lot more difficult than it is if you want to change after grade 9.

Dr. Leithwood: Could I make a comment in response to that? I would like to just say one or two things to persuade you that your entering view was the correct one.

Mr. Mahoney: I have not totally switched.

Dr. Leithwood: Good.

Mr. Mahoney: I am becoming more flexible.

Dr. Leithwood: That is actually our overall recommendation.

I wanted to point out two things, I suppose. That is, in spite of what you may or may not have heard from the boards that are making presentations, educational assessment is very much a crude instrument for cutting through to decisions about prospective abilities and prospective likely success at school.

When you combine that with the sometimes invidious circle which kids who find themselves in general and basic programs live through in secondary schools, it is a little bit like sentencing someone to a long prison term who is not guilty. Let me just comment on the invidious circle.

Mr. Mahoney: That is what school was like when I went.

Dr. Leithwood: Yes. You and I have a shared experience here and know at first hand what it means to have someone in even a general-level program, as compared with someone who is going through an advanced-level program, and how far they can fall behind in terms of the basic achievement that is occurring because of the lack of homework, because of disruptions in the class and how they can become quite unmotivated to continue being interested in school because they get such social support from the peers they find themselves associating with all the time.

It is just something that grows, I think, the longer you find yourself in a stream, particularly a stream that is not an advanced stream. If you start it earlier, the decrement is going to be worse.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank very much the OISE delegation for your information to our committee today. I too found the statistics and the data that you provided very helpful. In

addition, I understand that you have been very helpful to our research staff. They have mentioned that on numerous occasions you have provided them with information and perspective. We do express our appreciation for that.

The select committee on education stands adjourned until two o'clock.

The committee recessed at 12:31 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:13 p.m. in committee room 1.

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to start this afternoon's hearings of the select committee on education with a presentation by the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation. Welcome to our committee. We are looking forward to hearing your pearls of wisdom today, so we are glad that you are now before us.

We have allocated one hour for your presentation, which does include question time from the members. We are hoping there will be sufficient time at the end for us to glean even more pearls of wisdom through our questions. Please begin whenever you are ready. Perhaps you would start by introducing yourself for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL
TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Mr. Kendall: My name is David Kendall and I am the president of the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation. To my far right is Bill Martin, first vice-president. To my immediate left is David Lennox, general secretary, and to my right Linda Grant, staff officer.

We welcome the opportunity to present to the select committee. We are aware that it seems as if education is taking a second spot today in that we have lost the television coverage, I understand, to Sunday shopping. That is somewhat unfortunate.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Do you want to teach on Sunday?

Mr. Kendall: We teach every day.

Mr. Jackson: Just for Hansard, it should be noted that room is not being used at all today, so we did not lose it.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: It is being used, but it is not being used by a committee.

Mr. Jackson: It could have been. The program could have been taped. I think it is unfortunate, looking at today's docket, that the public did not get the benefit of it. I am pleased that you put it into the record, but I am disappointed that it was not resolved.

Mr. Keyes: If I had known that they were going to be meeting on Sunday shopping, I would have gone back to my committee. I have been on it for six weeks.

Madam Chairman: I too had understood that the Sunday shopping—I should not even call it a Sunday shopping committee—the standing committee on administration of justice, giving justice for all, was going to be in room 151. It is regrettable that we did not have your excellent presentation there.

Mr. Kendall: We have a position on Sunday shopping, so perhaps while we are here we can go next door and speak with them also.

Madam Chairman: If time allows, we will certainly be glad to hear those viewpoints, but judging from previous experience on this committee, we will no doubt not have time for that. Please proceed whenever you are ready.

Mr. Kendall: The select committee in this second round has identified four issues for discussion: grade promotion, streaming, semestering and OSIS. We have determined to deal extensively with the topics of grade promotion and streaming. We will deal with the topics of semestering and OSIS as they relate to the elementary panel only. We presume other teacher federation groups will deal specifically with semestering and OSIS.

These recommendations that we will be providing to the committee certainly indicate a need for a change in attitude by the parties involved, and by that I mean the government, the parents, the community and the teachers. It also involves a substantial ongoing commitment on the part of the government in terms of the financing of education.

The brief itself will be presented by Linda Grant, the staff officer and the major drafting person of the report itself, and I will follow up and deal with the recommendations. At this point in time, I would like to turn it over to Linda to deal with the specifics of the brief.

Miss Grant: As the president mentioned, the majority of our remarks will be centred on the issue of grade promotion and streaming.

When we first started working on this, one of the first things we did was conduct an Ontario education resources information system search to look at the current research in the area. It was quite interesting and I think important to note that there was actually very little done in the past 10 years. I am suggesting to you that this is because teachers have now come to recognize that the philosophy outlined early in 1975 in The Formative Years is one that promotes continuous

progress and encourages teachers and society to address the needs of the individual. That was followed up later in 1984 by the OSIS document, which has a similar philosophy, and then regulation 554 which specifically addresses the needs of students who are exceptional.

In 1988, our teachers realize that continuous progress is in the best interests of our students and that it is the combined efforts of all partners in the education process—teachers, parents, students and the community at large—that will lead to the creation of an educational environment that is most conducive to accountable continuous progress.

I would like to address the term “accountable continuous progress.” What is meant by that? We are suggesting that teachers need to be accountable, certainly to students, to parents, to their colleagues and to society at large, to provide for promotion data based on diagnosis and based on having a rationale for decision-making from all parties, that they be accountable to the parents, the students and their colleagues for that rationale and that they be accountable to assess and to communicate their findings and to modify the program.

It is not just continuous progress: “Move the child along continually.” That is the accepted norm. It is very important that that concept, to us, be combined with the term “accountable continuous progress.”

The issue of promotion and nonpromotion has been debated for a long time. It really is not a debate; it is a paradox. We have to meet both the needs of the individual and of society. There are some people who will make it a debate for ever. For those people, promotion and nonpromotion will always be an issue.

On page 5 of the submission, we identify six issues we believe are important for looking at the issue of grade promotion: societal perceptions and expectations; student learning styles; alternatives to a promotion-nonpromotion regime; assessment resources; professional development; and communication with parents.

Although the vast majority of the Ontario public supports the current emphasis on the fullest possible development of the individual, the reality is that our public is still entrenched in the reality of a grading system. It is what we called our history, our security, our understandable norm. To dispense with this grading system right now, I think, is unrealistic.

We who are involved in the education process have to recognize the anomalies that occur when teachers are functioning in schools where ac-

countable continuous progress is a belief system, but the grading system remains the reality.

As a former school principal—I am going to draw from my own experience now—I can remember encouraging with my community and with my staff the development of the continuous progress program, particularly in the primary division where we looked at the child in a division as opposed to a grade at time; yet I had to put that child on some teacher's register and I had to fill out the ministry school report as to how many students I had in grade 3 or grade 6 or grade 8. So we certainly, as a staff, promoted continuous progress; yet the reality was that we were locked into a grade promotion system.

Student learning styles: Teachers know that students learn in different ways, at different rates, in different time spans and different situations. There are different priorities that researchers suggest and different paradigms they draw up for dealing with this: left brain-right brain, spurts and plateaus, Piagetian child development.

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Teachers are aware of the complexities of the teaching-learning process. What I think we who are interested in education are not fully aware of and do not understand when it comes to implementing some of these ideas is the complexity of integrating that knowledge with the teaching-learning process in the daily classroom program. It is relatively easy to become knowledgeable about these things, What is very difficult, time-consuming and frustrating is to begin the process of applying that knowledge to the day-to-day teaching process. I think we have given lipservice to that whole area of addressing learning styles. It is tough slugging. Tremendous professional expertise is required to actually do that in the classroom.

With regard to alternatives to a promotion-nonpromotion regime, there is no single solution. OPSTF is suggesting that there is no one right answer. Our educational system must provide for maximum flexibility, another key word in our submission. We must be able to withdraw students for special assistance, we must be able to provide resource help in the classroom, we must be able to use a variety of learning settings in and out of the school and we must be able to use a variety of teaching styles for auditory learners and for visual learners. We have specialized programs for English-as-a-second-language students. We must involve everyone: the home, other professionals and the community at large. These are not frills; they are

an integral part of real responsibilities, not lipservice but real responsibility.

With regard to assessment procedures, teachers need in-service professional development in the area of effective use of evaluation strategies. They have been using them and they are aware of them, but we need further professional development in this area. They need to learn to use a wide range: standardized testing, diagnostic tests, classroom observation and input from others. The emphasis in accountable, continuous progress is always going to be on diagnosis rather than a specific achievement criterion. That is a very critical attitudinal difference. You do not test to find out where the child is, you test to find out where the child is going, and that is quite different.

OPSTF has a very clear evaluation policy outlined in the handbook. It has been attached to this submission as an appendix. We have developed a resource book, called *More than Marks*, to help teachers further develop their assessment abilities. The early identification report completed in 1986 by the ministry clearly outlined that we need appropriate procedures for boards to implement early identification, assessment and diagnostic procedures.

With regard to professional development, we simply cannot dispute the correlation between attentiveness to professional development and the attainment of specific desired objectives in education. Again, I am going to speak personally here; I know this as a principal. If I want to make changes in my school, as a principal, I have to provide the leadership for that, but without professional development it is a hopeless task. I also know this from the research.

Fullan and Connelly, in their teacher education report, make two interesting statements. Our schools are often "not places of professional activity...Action, not reflection, is the hallmark." Every organization in education must work towards creating schools that are places of professional activity. Professional activity involves an opportunity to reflect, to gather data, to talk, to make decisions with parents and colleagues that demand input. It is not simply a matter of action; reflection must be an important part.

We need resources. OPSTF, in conjunction with the ministry, provided resources for an activity-based teaching style in the classroom—Ages 9 to 12 has been a very well-received document in the field—and specific strategies for teachers to implement a resource-based or activity-based learning program. The Kids and

Curriculum Conference is another example of the kind of professional development that we can provide for teachers. They are outstanding examples of professional resources, but they are only resources, not the ultimate answer. These are tools.

The real change will come when we—the federation, ministry, school boards and the faculties of education—work together with an underlying commitment to creating school environments where teachers view the teaching-learning process as a truly professional activity that will result in meaningful change. Such commitment will require the creation of an environment in our education system where research, reflection, innovation, coaching, review and communication are essential characteristics of teaching professionals. That is the difference between the action and reflection that Michael Fullan and Michael Connelly are talking about in their teacher education report.

Change will not come through any organization designing more perfect in-service modules. There is nothing that could be more perfect than some of these, whether they are ours or someone else's often. It is the commitment, the co-operative effort that ultimately is going to make the difference when our schools can become places of professional activity.

With regard to communicating with parents, teachers are striving to create schools where parents and teacher partnerships can become a reality. Again, specific examples are professional activity days for students and the notecard for communicating with parents, *Just Between Us...*

Again, these are tools. Communicating effectively with parents and colleagues in this reflective mode is a highly complex process. We must learn to communicate better, to better involve parents in true, meaningful decision-making. Again, the difference is between lipservice and doing it in a truly meaningful way; we believe it is true and we try to do it. It is an attitudinal thing, where we work together creating school cultures where teachers can be reflective, open and participate in shared decision-making, and that is going to come with commitment, attitudinal change and leadership of all of the partners in education.

Accountable continuous progress, to summarize the section on grade promotion in schools, will happen when our schools become places of professional activity, and that involves all of the things I have been discussing for the last few minutes.

With regard to streaming, the sociological implications of streaming have made it a question of major concern today. We prefer to talk, at the elementary level, about grouping as opposed to streaming. A grouping can be a group of one, it can be a group of two or three, it can be a group of 15 or it might be a group of 25. The point I am trying to make is it has to be flexible. A group could last a day, a week, a month or a term.

The criteria for grouping will vary. It could be performance, it could be social needs, it could be psychomotor needs, it could be interest, or it could be specialized intervention, such as ESL programs. The issues, in some cases, are very similar to ones I have just addressed. With regard to societal expectations, we must serve society and we have to serve the individual.

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I have already mentioned criteria for grouping. Most parents will accept grouping for very specific time lengths for very specific reasons, short-term. Many parents have concerns about streaming. Intervention must be appropriate. That, to me, is key. Based on diagnosis, evaluation, modification and communication, early identification is certainly one way of providing for early intervention. The lower teacher-student ratio with reduction in class size has certainly been an asset.

Assessment: again, the keys are flexibility and variety. Teacher observation, class testing, standardized tests and input from others—you are almost like a sponge gathering all the data you can. And teachers need time. Time for what? Time for reflection as opposed to only action. Time to gather data, in its broadest sense; to reflect, to synthesize that data, to develop programs, to reassess, to modify, to communicate. To me, time, assessment, and flexibility in that assessment, are important.

Communicating with parents: I have dealt with that in the first part of the submission. Teachers must be accountable to parents and involve them in a meaningful way. If I could, I would underline "meaningful."

Professional development: The Provincial Review Report on the Early and Ongoing Identification of Children's Learning Needs, in 1986, clearly identified the correlation between the objectives of the early identification program and the reality in schools where boards had in-service. Where they had in-service, things happened; where they did not, things did not happen. That is the bottom line. Assessment strategies and professional development certainly are needed in the areas where students have

cultural and linguistic differences from the class norm.

Summary: Mr. Radwanski says outright, "Prohibit streaming." The Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation is certainly suggesting that more study is needed in the area. Leave grouping—make it informal, make it flexible in criteria, in time, in size of groups, but grouping is a very viable way to address the needs of children.

OSIS: Briefly, it is too soon to tell, is it not? We need a meaningful analysis and review. I was in a school with grades 7 and 8 as an administrator when OSIS was released. When you read the document, the philosophy is in line with The Formative Years. It is activity based; it addresses the needs of students; it is there. But when this document came out, the only page we administrators worried about, because it was action not reflection, was page 13. That is outlined in our submission. On page 13 of the report were the number of minutes to be spent in each subject area. Instantly, we were trying to find out how many minutes we could accommodate in our current math timetable and, if it was not right, how we could fix it.

The rest of the document, unfortunately, was lost. There has been so much criticism of OSIS and yet, if you really read it, the basic philosophy is similar to that expressed in The Formative Years. The intent is there for students. Our students need to experience the reality of this document. I do not think that has happened.

Guidance is an area OPSTF strongly feels needs attention. Many of the concerns and questions that arise, at the grades 7-8 level in particular, about students moving into secondary school, dealing with the current issues like drug abuse and so on, require the services of teachers trained in the area of guidance, and one of our recommendations certainly addresses that issue.

Semestering, certainly, when it became—do I use the word?—popular a few years ago broke the traditional timetable structure. I think that is a plus. It forced educators and the public to look at the way our schools traditionally had been set up. It is conducive to an active learning approach for students, with longer time periods. It is conducive to the learning styles of adolescents. From our point of view at the OPSTF, it should provide for more flexible transition from grades 8 to 9. There should be equal access to grade 9 in February as in September if it is truly a semestered program. I think that flexibility can be an asset for that transition. Like OSIS, OPSTF would suggest that it is too soon to tell and that

we need some study in the area of both OSIS and semestering.

David Kendall, our president, will speak to the recommendations which are outlined in our submission on pages 23 to 25.

Mr. Kendall: The 12 recommendations are before you.

Recommendation 1: In terms of teacher in-service, Linda Grant pointed out the Fullan and Connelly report on teacher education and the need for teacher in-service. We believe the ministry, school boards and teacher federations have a joint responsibility in that in-service network.

The whole concept of a co-operative coaching model is becoming common in the field and certainly is one that we are promoting, but it does not stop when the teacher signs the contract to teach for a board of education. It is an ongoing process and continues throughout the teacher's career. We are continually learning new things about teaching and the educational process, but it is a joint responsibility and we believe the ministry and the school boards have to take their share of that responsibility with the teacher federations.

Recommendation 2: Teaching as a professional activity. We believe that the ministry and boards of education must recognize that consultation is an important component of the teaching process. Classroom teachers need time to consult with other people on the resource team and with the special education teacher, the ESL teacher, the librarian, the psychologist and the health nurse, those kinds of individuals who are in the school building working with some of those children whom the teacher sees for the greatest part of the day.

Classroom teachers need the time to visit other classrooms and other divisions to see what is occurring in the school program. As I said, the "peer coaching model" is becoming an acceptable term and certainly some boards in the province are using that in developing policies on evaluation.

Recommendation 3: Miss Grant very clearly pointed out what we believe is accountable continuous progress. This should be the norm. It is not a concept that rules out failure, but it certainly does promote the continuity of programs and progress for the students.

Recommendation 4: As to guidelines for this accountable continuous progress, we believe that the ministry, in consultation with the federation, must develop some guidelines for teachers on

how teachers should diagnose students; on what resources are and should be available to the teaching process; on keeping records and decision-making processes in the school; on communication formats, not only within the school community but with the community at large; assessment processes; and certainly on re-evaluation processes of programs and teaching models.

Recommendation 5: Flexible grouping. We do support the concept for grouping, and it is not simply grouping based on ability. We group for a variety of reasons: for special needs, special interests of students, language and the strengths as opposed to the weaknesses the students have. That is an important component of the elementary program, particularly when you are dealing with the size of classes that we face at the elementary school level.

Recommendation 6: Early and ongoing identification procedures. In the ministry report that Miss Grant brought to your attention, there were recommendations about the need for better guidelines in this regard. Those guidelines never came to be. That was unfortunate. We need these guidelines in terms of parent-teacher interviews and in terms of teachers visiting the home to see how children function at the home level, involving the parents in the process in the classroom and in terms of direct observation of students.

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Recommendation 7 deals with in-service programs for teachers on assessing students. Teachers do use formalized, standardized tests, but there are more kinds of tests than that: there is the observation by the teacher in the classroom; there are teacher-developed testing mechanisms; data from parents provide input in terms of evaluating the progress of a student; and there is input from the educational community, all of those resource people who are involved with children at the school level but not necessarily in a classroom full-time.

Recommendation 8 deals with in-service programs on assessing students, but in the particular light of students from a different cultural or linguistic background. There is a desperate need, specifically in the major urban centres, for that kind of support.

Recommendation 9: Guidance services. I will control my friend to my left, because this is one area he has a strong position on. We believe the ministry guidelines are accurate if they were only to be implemented. We believe we should have

guidance counsellors in elementary schools to provide that support. Our guideline documents are very good at covering the fact that if we do not have a guidance counsellor, it is the responsibility of the principal and staff to do this. There are only so many things the principal and staff can do in a regular schoolday and program, and there is a desperate need. I am sure we are all familiar with the current kinds of pressures on students today, many pressures none of us in this room faced when we were going to school. We need people in there qualified in that area to provide that assistance.

Recommendation 10: Linda addressed the concept of OSIS. Implemented in 1984, we really have not got to the end of it. Students who started with OSIS have not left the school system yet, and we need to look at more of the philosophy behind the document rather than the time lines. Believe me, when you are teaching in a program in a school, time lines and bells and all of that become very important to you; you have to fit things within certain hours.

Recommendation 11: Support documents. Linda identified a number we have developed as an organization, and all of the federations do that. We are very proud of Ages 9-12, the document we developed jointly with the Ministry of Education. It was the first time ever that a federation had worked jointly with the ministry on developing a document, and we are proud of that. Linda pointed out, I believe, that we are currently developing two new documents: one, Ages 4-8, to deal with the primary division; and another called OSIS in Action, dealing with the intermediate grades. I believe those will be out in the field this year. There is a tremendous need for support documents in our classrooms.

Recommendation 12: Effective home-school communication. We do communicate with parents, but we need support, we need help in developing and looking at other possibilities in terms of that home-school communication network. That takes attitudinal changes on all of the partners' positions themselves: the ministry, the boards of education and classroom teachers. Again, we all like to think we can consult with parents during the schoolday, but that does not always happen; teachers have to consult with parents, and do, during evenings, weekends and other times. We need to change our attitude about the process of involving parents and how involved they are in the school situation.

Those are 12 recommendations we have brought forward. They do entail a major commitment on the part of government in terms of

funding. As elementary teachers, we originally were encouraged when the government proposed the 12-point plan in terms of reducing class size at grades 1 and 2 and providing more computer hardware and software in the school program. However, when we presented our position to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs back in February of this year, we described very clearly the need for about \$1 billion to address the problems we are facing in elementary education. The government at the time promised \$300 million and I believe this year we recognize just under \$100 million committed.

It is a major financial commitment; there is no question about it; but what is more important than our future? Our children are our future and we need to address that with speed.

We trust our brief has been helpful to you and at this point I am prepared to address any questions you might have.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Before we go to questions from the members, Linda did mention a number of the resource documents and David substantiated those comments. I was wondering if you could leave your copies of Ages 9-12 and— what was the other one? Colour Me Teacher?

Mr. Kendall: You all have them. We brought them for you.

Madam Chairman: So we do have that. I should open the brown envelopes that are sitting on my chair.

Mr. Kendall: Sometimes they hide them.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Sometimes brown envelopes bring down governments.

Madam Chairman: That is why I was afraid to open it. I was not sure what the message was.

Mr. Jackson: Let me thank you for an excellent brief. To herald your statement about ability grouping, when I read the Radwanski report as opposed to the media report, I think it was recommendation 18 or 19 condemning ability grouping which really disturbed me the most; that perhaps Radwanski had not visited a single classroom or talked to a single teacher with respect to how elementary classrooms at least, in that matter, worked. I was pleased with your treatment and underscoring of that, for purposes of the record.

I was intrigued, Linda, by your comments about equality of access for grade 8 students into grade 9. You talk about transitions, you talk about February entry in semestering. You are one of the first to raise it. It has been raised once

before, but not really defined. I wonder if we could spend a few minutes expanding on what was meant by that. I will start with the basic protectionist question: Are you talking about the program delivery at the elementary or at the secondary level? And then who gets the grants?

Miss Grant: I am going to answer the question, if you do not mind, through my experience as a school principal. As a school principal, the grants were my last worry. The children were my first worry. I never got into any of that. We worked it out as what worked best for the child.

Mr. Jackson: Now you are with the federation. Let me ask you now with that hat on.

Miss Grant: At the time I was a school principal this was an unusual circumstance. I am suggesting that OPSTF would like to see it a more frequent circumstance where a student at the traditional calendar end of grade 8 needed further development in language or math or whatever but certainly did not need to repeat the whole year, and with a secondary school starting off a different set of classes in February, why could we not provide additional assistance for a number of months?

In the last few years I had a learning resource teacher as a resource in the school, so I could take those few grade 8 students who needed intensive work in an area from the September to end of January time period, build up both their academic and social readiness for the secondary school scene, then move them into the secondary school effective the second semester. It worked very well. It should be norm.

Mr. Jackson: That is interesting, because my perception, when I listened to your incomplete first reference, was that it was an accelerator and it was to precede the entry. What you are telling me is that it would be a delay mechanism for remediation. That now has some fascinating implications with respect to some of the presentations we have had made.

Miss Grant: It could be for acceleration.

Mr. Jackson: Okay, but now I am looking at it from the context of remediation.

Interjection.

Mr. Jackson: I am a slow learner and proud of it. I may be around longer to do the same thing.

Mr. Mahoney: We identified that a long time ago.

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Mr. Jackson: My question is, what implications does that have for the students in terms of

socialization? We are hearing so much evidence about peer grouping and strengthening that at the secondary level. Now we are totally separating them from their limited peer group and thrusting them into an even more limited peer group because now they would go from their feeder school with eight other students who required the delay, as opposed to going with 30 and being dumped into a pool of 300 grade 9s, for example. Now that I am thinking about it, it raises a lot of questions.

Miss Grant: The kind of issue you are raising is certainly a real concern. It is something that could not be done without tremendous support mechanisms at both ends, the sending and the receiving. Yet if that is the best route to go of all the options that were explored—and again it goes back to flexible programming and looking at all the alternatives—then you provide the support mechanism to deal with not only the academic but also the feelings, the peer group and the need for support emotionally as well as academically.

The idea that the support stops when the child leaves grade 8 and goes into grade 9, whether it be September or February, has to stop. It comes back to shared responsibility for nurturing the child.

Mr. Jackson: But clearly it is a transition from a significant social experience—a radical social experience we are finding in some cases. It was even more pronounced before Bill 30 when we had the transition from separate elementary to public secondary. There is some very quiet documented research floating around that shows that it had some very negative implications.

I am just nervous about—I should not be nervous about a concept. I would like to explore it more clearly, but what we are hearing as a committee is that we should be stabilizing the semestering experience, which has to do with the amount of teacher interactions and the amount of peer group rotation and all those things. Your concept sort of caught me off guard because it is a function of semestering, which is an area that I am looking at.

I will leave it at that. I would like to pursue it with you more. I was serious about looking at the implications of the differences between the federations because there is the whole concept of the intermediate schools, which you have not touched at all in your brief but which has been raised on many occasions just in this very short part. We are not even at the halfway point of our presentation and it has been raised by quite a few groups. So I will pass, but that one did touch a nerve. I would like to pursue it further.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am not sure if we are into ability grouping or factors of social promotion or what we are here—antisocial behaviour—but it strikes me that there are several important things to come out of your brief. Some of them are to do with the distinctions around streaming.

We are all talking at very different levels about streaming, especially Mr. Reyecraft and myself. We tend to have a different point of view on it, but I think some of the words that you use are very important in this process, that groupings do not necessarily have to be ability groupings, that “informal” is a really important word to use and “flexible” is a really important word to use.

My concerns with the streaming that we see at the secondary level is the fact of the formality of it and the inflexibility of it in terms of the ability of people to move to and from it. The kind of grouping that it turns out to be is not necessarily ability grouping but often socioeconomic grouping. Those are things that we should guard against in a system. I do not see them as necessarily tied to what you are talking about.

There are those who are saying that if we are going to deal with the streaming issue in the terms I am talking about—homogeneous classes, the ability groupings very fixed in the curriculum and in the organization of the school—that to deal with that we have to deal with it at your level. We really cannot deal with it at the secondary level. For practical purposes, the secondary system is working that way because of the results of the elementary panel. They need to have this streaming approach to be able to deal with the different levels. This is an argument which we have been hearing lately, and I would like to hear your response to that.

Mr. Kendall: I will start off, because it is an issue that we have been concerned about, not necessarily just in the area of grouping and streaming, but certainly in terms of support for elementary education. During the last several years we have been trying to encourage the government to support financially the elementary system to a level where, in fact, we can provide the proper programs to students. We believe that often we get into a Band-Aid type approach to education; we fix this, fix that.

I have to suggest that is why we were somewhat encouraged by the actions taken last fall in terms of reduction of class size of grades 1 and 2, computer hardware, software, more resources and support for the intermediate science program. We believe that if we do not make a significant effort at the very early stages in a child's career, in those first two or three

grades, that is where the child learns many of the things that he or she will carry through the rest of his or her career as a student as well as a member of society.

That is why we need to do things like reduce class sizes. That is why we have to provide more resource materials and resource people. When we start looking at cuts—and we all know that boards and governments have been looking at cuts for a long time—the first kinds of things to go, obviously, are the guidance counsellors, the librarians, the special education, the English-as-a-second-language teachers, all of those support people.

Classes start getting larger and larger. Essentially, in an elementary school, it is great to talk about individual planning and progress, and we aim towards that. But, to be frank, when you have 30 children in a primary class, it is an impossibility to do. You have to group for a variety of purposes.

That is why we were hopeful that the government will continue, not just in terms of the actions now in reducing class sizes in grades 1 and 2, but throughout the elementary panel, throughout the programming and support and documentation, so that by the time students get to secondary school we are not into Mr. Radwanski's world of dropouts. They are having success at education, they are enjoying their education, not being pressured, because each time you lose something the more you lose, it gets compounded. Then, by the time you get to high school, you are so lost that you end up with dropouts.

That is my argument. I think the secretary wants to provide another piece of information.

Mr. Lennox: If I could. I have been quiet long enough here. I think the select committee is going to have to have—and I understand that you are having a couple of experts in education come in—and track right through education from when the child first enters the school, right until the exit from school.

We are going to have to go back and put our minds right around the fact that when 30 little individuals walk in there the day after Labour Day, their first day of school, from 30 different backgrounds, from 30 different ability groups at that time, we start them on this wonderful life experience and each June 30 we have this little bell that goes off.

We also decide that a four-year-old, a five-year-old or a six year-old is now going to start fitting into this little moulding that we call school. At this time we understand the age of the child with the “I/me” relationship. If you ever

look at their art at that age, you will see how big they draw themselves.

Then you get up to what we talk about in Ages 9-12. This is your gang age. You have to know about gangs. You have to know about going out there and playing marbles at recess and what is important to them, and the reason that there is an individual section in here, a small group section and a large group section, what is important to them at that age.

Those around here will remember gathering baseball cards in those days. You go back and talk about it. Then when you get the grade 7 and 8 level, you are looking at the peers; all of a sudden, you enter that "How do I dress?" social aspect. Then suddenly you are heading down the road towards that one grand day called June 30 of grade 8.

Richard knows exactly what I am talking about.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It was the high point of my educational career.

1500

Mr. Lennox: That is right.

But at that stage now we are looking at this great, monumental leap to another building, another whole system of education and one of the fundamental questions we have always asked is whether or not those students going to grade 9 need to go into a very homeroom class situation, where they are continuing the education that they had in grades 7 and 8. I know it was not perfect there, but I will tell you the teacher taught the whole child and had much more interaction than when we go into specialized subjects. The transition from that grade 8 over to that grade 9 is still over a great blockage and into a great, big building and a new phase of life.

I think we should do anything we can to ensure that we do what we did in elementary school to help the self-esteem of that child, to ensure that the child goes across that barrier intact, to continue the growth experience rather than, all of a sudden, being lost in that environment and becoming one of 300 or 400 in grade 9, rather than one of 30 in a class. I think that is the answer to your question. I am sorry it was a long answer, but I have been waiting just about an hour to get that out.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Pretty restrained, I thought, in general. I have one short question, if I could ask about a factual matter—that was my long question. Well, my question was not long, but I knew the answers would be.

It concerns guidance, which I agree we are hearing a lot about. What is the situation at the

moment? Do you have any idea how many schools across Ontario at their elementary panel will have full-time guidance at all? Do you have any information you have gathered on that, by any remote chance?

Mr. Kendall: You are not in for a short answer.

Mr. Lennox: No; I will give a very short answer, and it is probably the saddest answer you could ever hear in this room. I believe, in the elementary schools, less than 10 per cent of the schools have individual guidance services. You would find it more in an intermediate school than you would in the K-to-6.

The point I make here is that somebody out here in Ontario, or in Canada somewhere, dropped a leaf down that says that all the problems start in September of grade 9. That is why they need all the individual guidance help in grade 9, because these problems only started to develop during July and August after they left grade 8 and they hit grade 9.

If we had individual guidance services in grades 7 and 8, and 6 and 5, and 4 and 3, and 2 and 1, then we could get at those problems earlier and not be remediating them in grade 9, but getting them when they start. The answer is that under 10 per cent of the schools would have individual guidance services from qualified guidance counsellors in this province.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am wondering, because I have not asked for one thing from the ministry at all today, whether we might not get that confirmed on Monday then, while we are away. They are not going to have anything to do while we are in Windsor. If we could get ministry stats on exactly that point, I would be very pleased to see them because we have been hearing a lot from people about the need to have more guidance before people make the transition and to have those linkages made properly. That would be very important for us to know, I think. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: I hate to destroy your theory about the ministry's inactivity, but staff have been travelling with us as well. Would you like me to bring that to the two ministry representatives?

We have three questioners left and not much time, so I was wondering if you could perhaps keep your questions as brief as possible: Mr. Keyes, Mr. Reyecraft and Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Keyes: I want to follow up on the line of questioning—you do not say it directly in your recommendations but you are starting to touch on

it in your conversations—looking at the level of instruction in the high school. You seem to be now hinting at the fact that perhaps a continuous type of program through grade 9 and perhaps grade 10 on a general core level of programming, would be appropriate.

We are certainly hearing that from a lot of other sources. Having spent many a year with the students, knowing that in grade 8 I had lost them after February 2 when they had made their high school determination and from then until the end of June was really the hell time of the year, I believe personally—and I do not want to try to get it on to this committee, although I will be doing that over the months ahead—that delay of that would have been more appropriate.

But you have not said that here, and I am sure someone will comment on it. Do you see the need to be sure that there is more of a common core program to all students in grade 9 at least, and probably grade 10, which is my preference, before those selections are made and that more of the style of nurturing that we do in grades 7 and 8, etc., is carried on? The transition from the rather smaller school to the much larger new building with more teachers and all the rest of that could be facilitated perhaps more easily if they had the continuity of a similar type of program.

Interjection.

Mr. Keyes: You have not said it, though, anywhere in your recommendations.

Miss Grant: When you look at the age of the students in grades 9 and 10, they would be considered adolescent learners, and in looking at learning styles of adolescent learners, the style in grades 9 and 10 would be very similar to the style in grades 7 and 8. Given that, one would think then that the kind of program that best developed academic skills, social skills and so on should be quite similar.

Mr. Keyes: Which would also perhaps suggest why we might return to the middle school concept, which went from grades 7 to 10. That is not touched on and has not really been touched on by anyone; maybe one person has referred indirectly to it. I had hoped that there might have been some strong recommendation here to the ministry about the delay of selection of levels of instruction at the high school level, if it is to continue in that. You might want to think about that.

Five of the 12 recommendations consistently ask for the involvement of the Ministry of Education with the teachers' federations. I suppose that is a rhetorical question. Is that your way of indicating that you do not believe the

teachers' federations have been consulted adequately in the past with regard to the development of curriculum guidelines and other aspects? You have cited this one, but five of the 12 talk about the ministry working with teachers' federations.

Mr. Kendall: Again, we are trying to enhance the concept of the ministry, boards and federations working together in this process rather than travelling down different routes; and yes, we do have a fair amount of input and we take every opportunity to provide that, but I think we are trying to stress that further.

Mr. Lennox: I think we have what I will call improved consultation with the Ministry of Education, which I have to applaud. The aspect that we are focusing on is that there is a role to play for all partners. The problem we have had with the Ministry of Education is trying to come to grips with its philosophical base of being the policysetters and then turning all the in-servicing to external groups and therefore absolutely absolving itself of the leadership role—and when I say “leadership,” I mean direct, practical leadership by example—in the in-servicing of its documents. Therefore, it goes from the ministry to the school board and to the principal of the school and the staff to in-service it. You know well enough what I am talking about, from years and years when the document hit your office, you know what your job was.

Our federation strongly believes that the Ministry of Education must leave that concept of simply being policymakers and become more active out in the field to lead by-example in the in-servicing. We are prepared to do our share. That is why you see the teachers' federations seeking bridging there, saying that no one group can do it alone.

Mr. Keyes: Probably that would lead into the next one then. Maybe you would recommend, with tongue in cheek, that the curriculum superintendents should be people who are employees of the ministry again rather than employees of the board. Then that would be the role they would fulfil across the province—I do not see anyone answering down there—because it is following up on what some of those recommendations touched on.

If I could read you just one sentence from this morning, which I think reflects the feeling of a lot of teachers and groups, that was a statement that, “School boards and individual schools are in the best position to assess the needs of their students and community, and therefore program flexibili-

ty ought to remain an area for local autonomy and direct public accounting."

I would like to have heard your view on that as a federation. I know that while it has been passed to you and to us, as it used to be, for the in-servicing, I do believe that while there are four recommendations, 1, 6, 7 and 8, that all highlight in-servicing, we can do a lot of that without its being a costly venture; but it does require some verbal co-operation among ministry officials, board superintendents and other people when we get into that in-servicing.

That is one of the lacks I have seen, that of boards providing from the superintendent level those people working directly with the teachers on the in-servicing. They have done more of it themselves through PD days and the like. Maybe you have comments in that area. Does anybody want to comment?

1510

Madam Chairman: If you do, would it be possible to keep it as brief as possible? We have less than five minutes left and we have Mr. Reyecraft and Mr. Mahoney. I know they are both dying to ask their questions.

Mr. Lennox: A quick answer: Mr. Keyes, you are most correct. The school environment is the place where the action can take place but the signals and the initiation have to come from the ministry to the superintendents of curriculum with a very defined project. So often it is like fighting fires. You just get over here to start fighting this fire and we have three new fires over there. We have to identify where we are going to put our emphasis long-term enough to make a difference, because to teach teachers how to change strategies and implement behaviours is one of the most difficult tasks, as Miss Grant has already pointed out. I concur with your comments.

Mr. Reyecraft: Since OSIS was implemented, you have sent five graduating classes off to grade 9. We heard this morning from the Metropolitan Toronto School Board that during this time there has been a steady increase in the number of students whose course selections are predominantly at the advanced level. By the way, they said that their experience was that in the next three or four years the number of students in advanced levels will drop down considerably; in fact, to about half what it was in grade 9.

Is there a growing resistance to students to take general- and basic-level courses when you recommend that to them?

Mr. Lennox: I made recommendations to parents and to students for 18 years, and I would

say that with the implementation of OSIS there was a much stronger element of people saying it is easier to start at the advanced level and then sort yourself out later than it is to go upstream. Therefore, we have seen much more of that as being the process; if you start at the basic and try to get to the four-year level and then the five-year level, that is much more difficult than to try and find it too hard and then do it that way.

The answer is that society today, more in Ontario, is saying, "Let's make sure we don't cut off any avenues." That is why we go back to grade 9 having a very encompassing effect without the levels, which says to the student: "Come on board. Let's identify where we are and let's get the best stream a little further than that arbitrary decision on February 2 in grade 8." The answer to your question is yes, but I think that is done a lot for protection.

Mr. Reyecraft: I am sorry. Yes, but what?

Mr. Lennox: Yes, they are choosing more advanced levels and they are doing it for protection reasons. They are protecting themselves for later. Am I not making myself clear to you?

Mr. Reyecraft: No, I understand. I am just reflecting for a moment on your response, the last part of it particularly. Is there then a problem, especially with respect to community colleges, that a better job needs to be done in making elementary school graduates aware of what opportunities are still available to them even if they do not take advanced-level credits?

Mr. Lennox: The answer is, that is beneficial, but a student at the end of grade 8 is not making his decisions with all the variety of opportunities that he has from a knowledge base of: "Here are the career choices you have at community college. Here is the career choice you have at university. Here are the apprentice choices you have." It is just not fully within their domain at that stage of development.

Mr. Reyecraft: How much affected is their choice, then, by the status that surrounds being on an advanced-level timetable?

Miss Grant: I will answer again wearing my principal's hat. I would say, as David has already mentioned, they want to keep all possible options open. Between parent pressure to keep all possible options open by taking an advanced course and their belief as students that they want to be the best they can be, you combine that feeling, that attitude. The resulting effect is much stronger than any statistics you or I could provide.

I can remember sitting with parents and going over the statistics, saying: "You can go to community college. You could do this and you could do that." But at that level it is a combined hope for the child to still go to university or whatever. By making that decision on paper to fill out basic or middle of the road, at 12 or 13 years old, you are cutting it off.

In answer to your question, I really do not think that providing the statistics would swing for most parents and children.

Mr. Reycraft: That confirms what I have been saying about why grade 8 grads make those selections. Thank you for your answer.

Mr. Mahoney: I will be brief. I enjoyed very much your somewhat nostalgic walk through the school years. I always thought the gang age started at 40 actually. I did not know it was nine to 12.

Maybe you could just expand on recommendation 6 a little bit. When you talk about "appropriate early and ongoing identification," are you talking about IPRCs or are you talking about the streaming concept? Can you expand on that?

Miss Grant: When the early identification setup came into effect, all children who entered junior kindergarten or senior kindergarten had to go through an early identification process when they entered. Actually it could be grade 1, because some children can enter as late as grade 1. The teacher, the parent, the child and the health nurse met before the child actually entered the school. They went over, in the board I was with, an extensive series of questions about the development of the child, likes and dislikes, verbal skill development and the health record.

As principal, I sat in on as many as I could. The teacher visited the home. The parent came into the school. In that particular board, that was all part of a highly developed early identification process. By the time the child actually arrived, you had a profile of that child and the family. A relationship was clearly established.

It was not to stream the child at age four at all. To in-servicing teachers on the staff and principals in the board, that was very clearly articulated. That was what the process was. The particular board I was with developed a very effective process for that. The early identification review report, however, said that was not always the case. Where in-service did not go on, where boards did not clearly articulate early identification procedures, that did not happen.

One of the recommendations of the report was that those assessment procedures and identifica-

tion procedures were to be clearly articulated by the ministry, and boards were to be providing in-service. That did not happen.

Mr. Mahoney: I am curious about the extent that the board you were with did the identification, particularly the home visiting aspect. In a sense that ties into your recommendation 12. Being the father of three teenaged boys, I do not ever recall a teacher coming into my home to discuss anything of that nature. It was always the reverse.

Frankly, I think that is a good idea and in fact I even suggested to one group that some of the IPRC studies or meetings that are done should perhaps be done on the parents' home turf.

1520

Do you have any suggestions on item 12? It is fine to say do a study and research strategies. Parental involvement in education is something we have been hearing a lot about from the delegations which have come before us, but I have not really heard any specific, hard suggestions as to whether you put in regulations that require that or exactly what you do.

Miss Grant: I would suggest we need an attitudinal shift, first, to get beyond the 20-minute interviews and the teacher in-service that says, "Do not give the parent a primary chair or talk over the desk." Those are so superficial to the issue.

Mr. Mahoney: That is a car salesman's trick.

Miss Grant: We need to rethink the whole issue of parent involvement. Let me give you an example.

As educators, we often feel that the parent who does not come into the school for a 20-minute interview is second-rate. Through our verbal cues and so on, we will suggest that parent is obviously not interested in the child because he or she does not come into the school. In our society, with work schedules we have, that is often an unrealistic expectation.

We need to develop teacher thinking, educator thinking. How can we reach that parent? What time can we call when he or she is at work? Can we call in at work? That is okay to do that. How can we set up teachers with flexible timetabling so we have a setup where a teacher can work from three o'clock till 10 o'clock at night to interview the working parent, and do that in an acceptable way without having to feel guilty? We set up in my school a day where they come in at noon and work till nine o'clock. Many of these teachers would not be seen by the public in the morning

because they were supposed to be at work. It is an attitudinal thing, that is the point I am making.

The other issue I would like to leave with you is that we have to get beyond the superficial dialogue and learn how to be reflective practitioners, how to really talk. Let our minds open, surrender the idea "I am the principal, I am the teacher, I know all the answers" and enter into meaningful dialogue and learn how to make decisions together. There are skills involved in doing that.

Mr. Mahoney: Good answer. Thanks very much.

Madam Chairman: Just before you go, I have a quick question. Yesterday, when we were in Sudbury, one of the boards of education in northern Ontario made a presentation. A significant part of the presentation touched on parent involvement. One of the comments made was that teachers should try being more honest in the reporting arrangement, that quite often euphemisms were used. The teachers really did not want to say the child was having a great deal of difficulty or was not behaving properly, so they would use all these euphemisms. Many a parent could not read between the lines and really understand there was a problem. I have noticed it myself sometimes on my children's report cards and I have become very adept at interpreting exactly what that means and then we lower the boom. I was wondering if you would comment on that. Do you see that as a problem?

Miss Grant: Yes, I think it is a problem. I think the concern, in many cases, is a very legitimate concern. It comes back to my point with you of entering into reflective practice and helping teachers become reflective practitioners. Those people are open. They surrender their expertise and are willing to enter into dialogue and meaningful discussion with the person they are talking to, whether it be a parent or another colleague.

We in education have felt we had to have the answers: "You are the principal. You are supposed to know." To enter into a meaningful discussion where we quit doing the kinds of things you are describing is a whole attitudinal change not just on the part of educators but of the community and the parents more specifically to become accepting of a reflective practice mode where we can surrender our expertise, enter into dialogue, brainstorm all the alternatives and together come up with the answer. The sense of openness is important in the issue you have raised, but the expectation of society has been

that the educator is the expert. It is hard to surrender that trust, that expectation.

Mr. Lennox: There is nothing more arbitrary than the written word. The situation is that sometimes teachers say, "I'm going to put that down to save me saying it in four sentences," but it gets interpreted. That is why the parent must come in and have that one-to-one verbal communication to back it up. I believe the teachers can do a lot better with writing common English language rather than "edubabble."

Madam Chairman: I am not going to touch that one with a 10-foot pole. Thank you very much. I enjoyed very much your presentation today. I think we have had quite a stimulating dialogue ourselves, which is attested to by the fact that again we are running late.

Our next presentation will be the Ontario Business Education Association. Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee. We are pleased to have you with us today. A copy of your brief has been distributed to the members of the committee.

We have allocated half an hour for your brief, which includes not only presentation time but also questions from the members. If you could try, if at all possible, to conclude your presentation in the first half and then allow maybe 15 minutes for members' questions, that would be appreciated. Please begin whenever you are ready, and start by identifying yourself for the purpose of Hansard.

ONTARIO BUSINESS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Tuttle: My name is Sandra Tuttle. I am president of the Ontario Business Education Association. It is indeed a pleasure and a privilege to have this opportunity as the 95th president of the Ontario Business Education Association to address the select committee on education. May I briefly introduce you to the association I represent.

The Ontario Business Education Association/ Association éducation commerciale de l'Ontario, OBEA/AECO, founded in 1895, is a professional organization of business educators from across this province. We represent over 5,000 business teachers who develop and deliver business studies curriculum in the secondary schools of Ontario.

OBEA/AECO acts as a voice for business teachers on matters which pertain to business education. Although we indeed have professional opinions on all aspects of elementary and secondary school education, we are secondary

school educators, so in our submission to this committee we prefer to comment on issues directly within our expertise and our experience.

Just as a point of information, the executive of our association is made up of practising classroom teachers, heads of business studies departments, co-ordinators of business studies for several large school boards, and in my case I am an instructor at the faculty of education of the University of Toronto in the business studies department.

Over the years, business courses have provided young people in the intermediate and senior divisions with opportunities to reinforce and apply communication, computation, problem-solving and human relations skills and understandings, as well as work attitudes and ethics in business and the world of work settings.

Such basic business skills as keyboarding, accounting and computer use are important components of any business studies program and through such experiential learning activities as work experience, co-operative education and community involvement are easily transferred to the workplace. Many business studies courses in the senior division provide educational opportunities which can lead to direct employment upon graduation in accounting, stenography, retail and marketing and in computer fields.

In addition, may I say to you that a business studies program may also include Ontario academic courses in law, economics, accounting and administrative studies for the university-bound student?

1530

We are aware that this select committee on education held public hearings in July to address the educational philosophy and the goals of education in Ontario. We agree that before any educational issue can be resolved, the Ministry of Education needs to clearly articulate a philosophy of education and then develop effective policies and procedures that consistently—may I underline?—reflect that philosophy.

The question today seems to be: Should schools produce graduates prepared for the world of work or should they stress the growth of students as individuals? In resolving this fundamental issue, OBEA/AECO believes that the realities of an information age must be reflected in our education system.

This new knowledge-intensive global economy in which Ontarians live presents a significant challenge to an education system which now "must prepare individuals to be mobile, flexible, adaptable and versatile. The ability to learn will

be the premium skill in the future." That is a quote from the Economic Council of Canada, 1987. Future citizens of Ontario must be life-long learners who can think clearly, feel deeply, act wisely and participate fully in a democratic society, whatever their pursuits in life may be.

The school system seems to be meeting the needs of young people studying at the advanced level, as indicated by a comparatively low dropout rate of 12 per cent. However, the dropout rate is an unacceptable 62 per cent at the general level and 79 per cent at the basic level. Thus, making schools meaningful to nonuniversity-bound students seems to be the most crucial question to be resolved.

To this end, OBEA/AECO supports the position recently expressed to this select committee on education by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business: "The debate about whether we educate students to reach their greatest potential or to enter the workforce is rapidly becoming irrelevant—we have to do both." From this philosophical perspective, OBEA/AECO respectfully submits this discussion paper on the organization of the education process in Ontario.

The focus, however, of our submission to you is on OSIS. We believe, as I heard the previous group mentioning, that many of the ideals and directions in OSIS are as educationally valid today as they were in 1984. However, directions outlined in OSIS are not being realized totally, because there are too many other conflicting demands being imposed on the school system.

OSIS states that "the identification and achievement of the goals of education are shared responsibilities of students, teachers and parents." It appears, however, that the education system is expected to bear far more of the shared responsibility than it can effectively manage. OBEA/AECO agrees with a statement made by Duncan Green: "I personally think unrealistic expectations are being placed on the system.... We need to ask what the schools are uniquely equipped to teach and what can be handled to one degree or another by the family and by other agencies in the community."

For example, on September 2, 1988, the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward) announced that drug education would become mandatory starting in grade 7, effective September 1989. The importance of drug education, obviously, cannot be denied; however, some direction is needed with respect to the instructional time for additional curriculum. What of the current grade 7 curriculum should receive less attention?

I would turn now specifically to the curriculum. OBEA suggests that curriculum priorities must be more specifically stated. In turn, the goals of education are vague and abstract and these should be translated into more concrete terms that provide clearer guidance to teachers. In that regard, I might refer to a document with which I am sure you are familiar. On page 7 of this document, *Present Challenges, New Directions*, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation has portrayed an image statement that describes the ideal graduate, which I believe is a much more concrete explanation of the goals of education.

In this regard, OBEA is pleased to acknowledge—and I am pleased to say this after the comments I heard in the previous presentation—the excellence of the Ministry of Education Curriculum Guidelines in Business Studies, developed under the competent leadership of education officer Tom Tidey who, by the way, was a past president of the OBEA.

Each program in that guideline has clearly stated aims. Each unit of study in all courses at every level of difficulty has specific measurable learning outcomes, complete with a suggested time and evaluation framework and teaching strategies. These guidelines are prescriptive and helpful to teachers who are expected to deliver equal educational opportunities for all in classrooms across the province.

I would ask you, please, to refer to this guideline, the accounting guideline, which I believe has been distributed to you. It is one of 10 written by classroom teachers, business studies heads and co-ordinators, literally from all regions of the province, under the direction of an advisory committee made up of ministry, faculty of education, school board personnel and representatives from the business community. I am pleased to tell you that every professional accounting association had the opportunity to provide input and response to this particular document.

To illustrate what I mean by clear guidance, would you please turn to page 8, which lists there the aims of, in this case, the accounting program? Like the other programs within the business studies curriculum, this guideline indicates that students will be provided with opportunities to acquire certain content and certain knowledge, but further will be allowed to use computers; "develop effective business language and communication skills; develop the ability to think critically and apply problem-solving methods; develop business work habits and attitudes;

develop a positive sense of self-worth and a respect for others; identify and discuss values issues and values conflicts in business decision-making processes."

Indeed, it has been a very concerted effort to integrate content with, shall I say, generic life skills literally across the business studies curriculum. Not only that, but if you would refer to page 15, you will see there for the grade 10 introductory accounting course a suggested time and evaluation framework. Please note the core units; there are five of them. Then, if you turn the page, you will find there are specific measurable learning outcomes for each topic within each unit in this particular course.

That is an example of the material that we in business studies are working with at the present time. We would like to commend the Ministry of Education for such a job well done.

Turning back to the brief, OSIS states "the focus in the intermediate division must be on the integration of the learning experiences designed for the student," whereas "the emphasis in the senior division will gradually shift towards preparation for citizenship, employment and further study."

It appears, however, that these directions are not being realized in other subject areas, or at least not in all subject areas. OBEA/AECO supports the concept of integration in the intermediate division and of preparation in the senior division, but suggests that significant changes are needed: first, in the structure of the system; second, in curriculum emphasis; and third, in diploma requirements.

May I first address my comments to the structure? OBEA/AECO suggests—and I believe we may be the first to suggest this to you—that the intermediate division be redefined as grades 7, 8 and 9 and that the focus in all three years be on the integration of generic life skills across the entire curriculum. These generic skills should include computation skills, communication skills, creative thinking skills, problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills, work habits and ethics.

1540

In grade 9, a common curriculum of eight credits with exposure to all subject areas would provide an exploratory year of study. However, the teaching strategies in each subject must focus on the integration of generic life skills.

I would ask you please to refer at this time to the Policy for Program Planning and Delivery document, particularly pages 10, 11, 12 and 13 which outline the over 80 courses that are provided in the business studies program. But

particularly, to clarify what I mean further by generic life skills, refer to page 18 where you will see those listed that I have just briefly referred to. I would once again remind you that it is our intention in business studies to integrate these life skills with content in all business studies courses.

To return to the brief, nonstreamed classes would also ease the transition—and I was hearing so much of this in the previous presentation—of students into the secondary school environment and delay curriculum decisions that are often irreversible. These decisions are now made without ever experiencing a class in secondary school.

Class size should be limited to 20 students so that more attention can be given by the secondary teacher to the varied interests and capabilities of the nonstreamed learner. Clearly defined and essential competencies must be achieved before a credit is earned. The onus should be on students to demonstrate capabilities that will determine placement in classes in grade 10 which are streamed and which challenge them at the appropriate level of difficulty.

Home-room teachers assigned to grade 9 students should have excellent counselling skills and a sound knowledge of the entire school curriculum. Students will be better informed and able to make valid curriculum decisions after an exploratory year of study.

I would like to ask you please to turn to page 10 in the brief where you see outlined what OBEA is suggesting as a grade 9 common curriculum.

The Ministry of Education should design a common curriculum in each subject area listed here with a focused cross-curricular approach to learning based on the acquisition of the generic skills that I have just mentioned to you. You will see an interesting idea there whereby we have four full credits with eight half credits in order to give as much exposure to all subject areas as possible.

In our proposed senior division—and you will recall that we are suggesting the senior division now be grades 10, 11 and 12, OAC—an additional eight mandatory credits must be earned, but beyond that students would be free to select courses that satisfy their interests and career potential or intentions.

All subject areas, we believe, offer a greater variety of courses in the senior division. It is important that students have access to as many of these courses as possible. By expanding the senior division to three years, students will have the opportunity to assemble meaningful, specialized packages of subjects and experience more of

the excellent approaches that are suggested in OSIS.

We suggest that streaming be continued in the senior division. Offering classes at various levels of difficulty will more effectively meet the demands and the needs of students with differing aptitudes. Streaming allows teachers to develop pedagogical techniques based on levels of learning and a variety of learning styles that are most appropriate for basic, general or advanced classes.

If classes are not streamed, there is a danger of challenging students beyond their capabilities and discouraging them, or failing to provide the stimulation necessary and boring them. Both circumstances will cause students to drop out of school.

Upon consultation with grade 9 teachers and a home-room teacher, as well as spending one semester in a secondary school, students will be in a better position to decide on courses and the appropriate level of difficulty for further study. However, throughout the senior division there should be opportunities for changing to a different level of difficulty. I am talking about transition courses, independent study programs and peer tutoring systems. Students should not be locked into irreversible curriculum decisions.

To provide ongoing counselling assistance, as well as to nurture a sense of belonging, a home-room grouping of students should remain together and with the same home-room teacher, who may act as a mentor for the three years of grades 10, 11 and 12.

If you would skip over, please, as I see time is moving on, to page 11, one point I would like to elaborate on before I turn the floor over to questions and answers has to do with relevance. OBEA/AECO agrees with a recent statement made by Dr. Shapiro: "Students don't see how what they're doing in school is going to be relevant to their future adult lives. So it becomes easy to decide to drop out and deal with things they at least view as relevant."

Future high schools will have to be more relevant to the lives of students. Unless this is achieved, Shapiro believes, high schools will fall short of their primary purpose, which is helping students make the transition into adult life as individuals, workers and citizens who participate fully in a democratic society.

I am going to extract a couple of ideas from the last couple of pages, so that we can conclude this part of the presentation fairly quickly. We believe the school system must emphasize experiential learning, co-operative education,

work experience and community involvement. I would like to point out to you that co-operative education began in business courses, not in the guidance program.

Students quickly—it is obvious to them—see the relevance of keyboarding, of computer applications in business, of accounting, retailing, marketing, law, entrepreneurship studies, business math and business English. These are subjects and this is content they can actually use.

A new course in entrepreneurship studies, by the way, initiated by business educators in Ontario and highly acclaimed by the International Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, provides tremendous opportunities for linking schools to the community and enabling students to make a contribution to their community.

With regard to teaching strategies, although the senior division we are suggesting is more content-oriented, we must always be mindful that teaching strategies, particularly at the general and basic level, continue to develop strong, I will say generic life skills, since I have already listed what I mean by those life skills.

OBEA endorses the continuance of a notation on the Ontario student transcript indicating a concentration on business studies when eight credits have been earned. There is a very specific goal that the student can focus on and actually achieve.

Also, OSIS refers to school-related and community-related packages. We hope that schools continue to plan, or shall I say plan in a better way, opportunities for students in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen, that will be the end of my presentation from the brief. I would be pleased to respond to any of your questions and comments.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you, Mrs. Tuttle, for presenting the recommendations of the Ontario Business Education Association. Perhaps by way of welcome to someone else who has entered the room while you were making your presentation, and since he was quoted in your brief, I should advise you that Duncan Green is now with us.

Mrs. Tuttle: That is quite all right.

The Vice-Chairman: I am not really sure in what capacity he is here, but I look forward to learning that, I am sure, before the afternoon—

Mr. Jackson: I think he has a job couriering over all of Mr. Johnston's requests. He is now the new official runner for the Ministry of Education.

1550

Mr. Green: Bear in mind I have to reappear before this committee.

Mrs. Tuttle: Thank you for informing me of that. That is helpful.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I hope he is not a talent scout.

Interjection: He would be in the wrong room then.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Exactly. I wonder if you can explain for the committee the connection of your association with the teachers' federations? How do you operate in connection with them?

Mrs. Tuttle: Of course, the overriding association is the Ontario Teachers' Federation, which you will hear from right after me.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Right.

Mrs. Tuttle: With that group are the affiliates, such as the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. I say OSSTF because that is the one I am most quickly familiar with. In addition to that, you have subject associations, such as the OBEA group. Then there are the English teachers, science teachers, family studies, and on it goes, all with a subject orientation or focus.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is just that the recommendations you have made today—I have not heard whether it is the case that OTF will be changing its position when it comes forward this afternoon—do not fit any of the groups you are mentioning. I was just wondering how that worked.

Can you tell me if since OSIS there has been an increase or a decrease in the number of business teachers in the province? What has been happening to your courses since OSIS?

Mrs. Tuttle: From the statistics I am familiar with, and I would of course have to get something more exact from the ministry, I do not see any negative result because of OSIS. I should say that particularly of the senior division. We do in the intermediate division, because there seems to be a tendency for the students to try to cover all of their mandatory credits immediately. Like, "Let's do as many as we can in grade 9 and grade 10." Of course, that is not necessary.

They can be spread over the full four years, but because there seems to be that thrust in grades 9 and 10, we do see a decline in our enrolments there, but not so much in the senior division, unless you are talking about students who are fast-tracking, which is now taking place. Those students simply do not have the time to take many of our courses, unless they take the Ontario

academic courses I referred to earlier—economics, law, administrative studies, computer studies, etc.—which would be university entrance courses.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Has the number of students getting into the eight business courses and getting that notation remained steady, or have people opted into sort of more computer-style courses just to add on to their other courses because of interest?

Mrs. Tuttle: I really do not know the numbers on that. What you are asking me is, in terms of the notation are more or fewer students receiving that? I am not certain of that statistic, but would certainly be pleased to forward that information to you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other short question I have is, in terms of your proposed grade 9 common curriculum you have introductory computer applications and keyboarding for one full credit, whereas many other subjects have less. That is equal to what is asked for English, math or science, and I found that interesting. I wonder if you could make some comment about that.

Mrs. Tuttle: Yes, certainly. I am in turn interested that you are perceiving the introductory computer applications course as a business studies course. Did I interpret that correctly?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I think you did.

Mrs. Tuttle: That is not necessarily the case. Due to grant-eligible microcomputer systems funding and the availability of ministry-licensed software, students, we believe, must learn early to use software applications literally across the secondary school curriculum, in English, history or wherever. Therefore, we feel that introductory computer applications is a course for everyone, because it should be integrated in all subject areas.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is tough being a Luddite at the end of the century.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you very much, Mrs. Tuttle. I am wondering if you can talk about in-servicing, etc., with your programs and whether or not you feel there is adequate opportunity in business education to do such. You have referred to the co-operative effort in developing it.

Yesterday, these same documents were held up, not to ridicule but saying: "Look at all the documents we have. We have too many documents. What do we do with them? Our teachers have not had time to digest them. They know nothing about it." Can you frankly tell us as

business educators? This came from people further up the education ladder yesterday.

Mrs. Tuttle: May I ask, is that in reference specifically to business studies guidelines?

Mr. Keyes: Yes. They actually brought along a nice little plastic container with all 10 of them in it and were saying what a horrible mess had been dumped on them, literally. I suppose I am exaggerating a bit and overstating to get the point across. They were saying: "They are all dumped on us. We never have a chance to know what is in them. Therefore, we are not using them very much."

I think they seem to be very thorough and complete and the way they were developed quite appropriate, but what about in-servicing? Do you find teachers complaining bitterly in your association, that they do not have time?

Mrs. Tuttle: Of course, one of the primary focuses of the Ontario Business Education Association, although I have said that we do act as a voice for business educators, but indeed the thrust of our activities is on in-service. We provide fall workshops. We provide a spring conference. We provide newsletters and resource booklets every year. From our executive, we have many offers and people who are prepared to go out and speak across the province.

We are aware absolutely of what you are saying. There is a lot of new material in these business studies guidelines that is throwing the—shall I say—traditional teacher for a loop, but I guess it did come through in my comments. Maybe I did sense that you were somewhat, you know, not amused but interested. But I did pay commendation to the ministry because not only have these guidelines been presented, but what are called second generation documents are also being prepared.

Various school boards across the province have been asked to write, let's say, a grade 10 accounting course, along with colleagues from across the province. This is all being pooled. These are referred to as second generation documents. Then they will be distributed to school boards across the province.

In fact, all school boards are not reinventing the wheel, shall I say? We have these. We have second generation documents. Then, yes, it does come to the school boards to provide in-service. I understand that it is very difficult for the school boards to do as much as truly is needed in that regard.

Mr. Keyes: I was not amused. I was very impressed that you commended the ministry for that approach.

Just one other one quickly. Would you probably agree—I have not had the opportunity of taking any business courses ever in my education; that is one of my deficiencies, one of many—but would you not agree that nearly all of the program courses and credits are of a spiralling curriculum-type nature in this area? I have sometimes wondered then if the “streaming” by basic, general and advanced is appropriate in these particular fields?

Could you not develop a continuum of skills in keyboarding, as an example, or economics and accounting even, without streaming? You are saying, “Do away with streaming through grade 9 and then introduce it.” I guess I find it, in my opinion, not having participated—maybe it was my ignorance—that it is easier to look at a continuum of skills in the business studies area than it is to have an understanding of Shakespeare, English language and concepts of history.

Mrs. Tuttle: I understand what you are saying. It is more obvious to see a spiral there, a continuum in a skill than in other subjects. However, I am having some difficulty with your question because in fact that has nothing to do with the idea that students do learn with different learning styles and different capabilities.

Although, for example, a keyboarding program does spiral—keyboarding 1, 2 and 3—you still have students who come into that keyboarding classroom with differing levels of capability and different learning styles which, therefore, necessitates different teaching strategies, evaluation approaches, etc., that are possible in the streamed class.

Mr. Keyes: I just felt that perhaps with a spiralling curriculum of skills, you might have gone through it and then, based upon their competency, their achievement would have been perhaps rated slightly differently. That was all. They might have reached an advanced level and even some might have reached the basic level.

A final comment: it was just philosophically something just seemed missing. I have not had time to digest the document. I am trying to understand why in the very beginning we talk about teaching strategies and we talk about them for the advanced level and for the general level. We leave out any reference at the very beginning of basic level, which I thought was basic to the whole teaching of things. But then at the very back of the book we tuck in and we find—

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Mr. Jackson: What page is that?

Mr. Keyes: Well if you are looking at pages 10 and 11 you get the teaching strategies for a

general level and for the advanced level. You never make any mention about teaching strategies for the basic level. But then at the very back of the book, on pages 98 and 99 as a quick example, you find recordkeeping data at the basic level. I guess I am trying to understand why there was not continuity shown as teaching strategies for the basic level, as well as for the general and the advanced.

Mrs. Tuttle: You have stated exactly. The contents indicate that the accounting program is in fact made up of two major areas. One is accounting and the other is recordkeeping. Accounting is taught at the advanced and general level.

Mr. Keyes: But not at a basic level.

Mrs. Tuttle: It is not taught at the basic level. Rather, recordkeeping is taught at the basic level.

Mr. Keyes: We have no basic-level accountants around. They are all general or advanced?

Mr. Furlong: The guy who does my taxes is pretty basic.

Mr. Keyes: Okay. I just was wondering, just trying to do a quick glance. Thank you very much for your presentation.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for coming before our committee today. The vice-chair just whispered to me that you had a very good presentation. You made some converts.

Mrs. Tuttle: Thank you, Ms. Poole. It is certainly the hope of OBEA/AECO that the concerted efforts of all of us who are so dedicated to education will provide a system that meets the needs of our young people both today and in the years ahead. Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Our next presentation will be the Ontario Teachers' Federation. If you could come forward please and be seated. Welcome to our committee.

Mr. Albert: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: We are looking forward to receiving input from the OTF about the issues that we are looking at in education—primarily OSIS, streaming, semestering and grade promotion, although from time to time other issues do seem to creep in, naturally enough. We have allocated one hour for your presentation, including time for members' questions. If it is possible for you to allow time at the end for members to raise other points, we would very much appreciate it. Please begin whenever you are ready and if you could start by introducing yourself for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Mr. Albert: Certainly. I will start on my far right. Fellow Sudbarian Guill Archambault, our second vice-president of OTF; Margaret Wilson, the secretary-treasurer of OTF; and to my left, Bev Polowy, first vice-president of OTF. I mention Sudbury only because I hope you enjoyed your stay in our home town yesterday and I hope that the submissions were stimulating.

I want to begin by assuring you—you must be seat-weary—that we will not read our report to you. It is called USSR, Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading. We will highlight a couple of things. My observation of the way the committee has worked is it that it is more fun to engage in the give-and-go of questions and answers and we are certainly looking forward to that part of the presentation as well.

I do want to start with a historical perspective, however, and you will not find it in our brief. On August 28, 1961, Education Minister John Robarts presented a new program for secondary schools in Ontario, which was a complete reorganization of the school system.

Why did Robarts reorganize? Up to that time, 60 per cent of students entering grade 9 dropped out of school prior to completion of grade 12. "Robarts believed that one program of studies providing for entrance to universities, institutes of technology, teachers' colleges, and nursing schools appears to be too difficult or unsuitable for many pupils. Robarts wished to gain greater acceptance for the commercial and technical programs of the high schools. The elitist, university-bound system was to go. A more liberal, humanistic approach was the new order. High schools were to be for everyone."

By the way, the Robarts' plan consisted of a common core in grade 9 for all four- and five-year students. In education, everything old is, indeed, new.

I know we are not here to reinvent wheels and certainly we all recognize that the first graduates of the public secondary schools of the 21st century are in our schools today. Your job is onerous. I think that in terms of the opportunity to present and exchange views and ideas on education in this province, one of our problems has been that we have not worked out an appropriate forum to discuss change in education that involves people like yourselves, the public, parents, students, and the teaching community.

We look forward to your final report, and we hope that what we have to say to you, while perhaps of a general nature, will be of some assistance to you.

We point out, at the bottom of the first page, that teacher organizations in this province have often been critics and builders and reformers of the system.

On the second page, though, I have no problem in sitting before you as the president of the Ontario Teachers' Federation and saying to you that the commitment, the responsiveness, the dedication of teachers in this province is second to no other system in the world. One of education's famous critics, George Radwanski, acknowledged even in his report that teachers make a considerable commitment to education at all levels.

While the Ontario education system is not perfect, it does have a lot of strengths. We hope your job is not just to address shortcomings but equally to acknowledge and build upon the strengths in our educational system. I believe Ontario has done a good job of educating its young people. Again, that will not surprise you, but I ask you to consider our economy, I ask you to consider our labour statistics, I ask you to talk to new immigrants into this province who take language courses, who take entry courses which prepare them for the world of work and talk to them about what they believe of our education system.

I want to say something else to you. I hope you do not just listen to us in this chamber or in chambers in Sudbury and other communities, but that you take the opportunity, either as a committee or as individuals in your riding, to get off the bus, get out of your cars and go into the schools. That is where you see the difference. The critics of the education system are outside its walls. I think the people who come in contact and who walk through the doors of the schools invariably come away impressed.

The kind of issues we want to address we hope will acknowledge that while we have a good system we are not opposed to making a good system better.

On page 3, we talk about the consultative process that sometimes occurs and sometimes does not occur in Ontario. I hope it is not the first time you have heard that change from the top down does not necessarily translate into change in the classroom. We would argue for a broad approach to consultation and we would argue that many people from various backgrounds need to be involved before changes are made, and that change itself has got to be constructed in a way that it does not affect 750,000 young people in the province until it has been tested.

If that means pilot projects, if it means encouraging greater flexibility within school boards across the province, so be it. We should not be selling a pig in a poke to our education system.

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The point we want to make near the bottom of page 4 has to do with the kind of planning that occurs. We believe most ventures succeed or fail in the planning, in the initial stages. Unfortunately, in Ontario too much change has been in response to perceived disaffection, to the people who make the most noise in our community, often newspaper editors, to the people in the community who perhaps influence the most power, the parents of middle-class students, upper-middle-class students. The advanced-level programs get the lion's share of the attention, certainly in the secondary schools.

We argue on page 5 for better communication from the school system, from those of us who are responsible for educating young people, with parents and with the larger community. We support, as you see at the bottom of page 5, any effort to make the public education system more open and accessible to the general public, especially to the parents and children in our communities.

On page 6, we want to say to you that we believe Ontario has good evaluation programs in place, that the evaluation vehicles themselves are satisfactory and in fact can be built upon in other ways. We believe that recommendations or suggestions dealing with evaluation can be referred to and handled by groups like the provincial advisory committee on evaluation policy and practices.

At the bottom of page 6, we recognize that as a society one of our difficulties in the school system is arriving at the limits of how much school systems can actually do. Being a teacher, I have often stated my own personal belief that the education system itself is in many ways an extension of parenting. It is difficult, in a societal setting with so many goals, so many aspirations for our school system, to always be able to sort through the immediate priorities.

If you look on page 7, we list some of those to you. We throw in substance abuse as the new order of the day, not to indicate that it is not important, but obviously any time something has to be done to reach all the young people in our province we look to the schools for help and assistance. While that is totally appropriate, we hope that teachers are involved in the decisions

about the kinds of programs that will be delivered in our system.

With the point near the bottom of the page about the goals of education, we want to point out that there are some goals which are program goals and there are probably some goals which are simply underlying principles. When we deal with values education, we have to recognize that that is a difficult problem which all multicultural, multiracial societies have to deal with. That is not easy and it takes a lot of dialogue with our various constituent groups.

On page 9, we get into the area of technical education. I suppose that people who believe the education system is a training ground for work probably have not been in our schools in some time. Change is so rapid, as you and I know, that the kind of specific job skills schools can provide to young people simply ensure that by the time they are in the workplace those jobs are obsolete and they will not have employment. Job-specific training does not seem to be the order for Ontario.

On page 10, I bring to your attention that it is our belief as educators that what you want are educated workers, enlightened consumers, not docile automatons in our world.

Teacher education is an issue that we address at the bottom of page 10. As you know, there is considerable discussion going on within the educational community in this regard.

This is one of the points we make strongly on page 11. I know in the questioning of the previous presenter the question about in-service training came in. I simply want to say to you that governments often make short-term commitments to resources, if they make any commitments at all. The most striking long-range reorganization that has occurred in education in the last decade is probably the OSIS document, and government made no commitment to in-service training or to educating the teaching force at large in terms of implementing that particular document.

Obviously other people, other affiliates, have presented to you the concern about the supply and demand of teachers. How can we anticipate the needs of Ontario's educational system? How can we be sure that we in fact are ready to teach the graduates of our schools who will have to live and work in the 21st century?

We talk at the bottom of the page about access and equality. Obviously, that is one of the strengths of the public school system.

At the bottom of page 12, some of the things that the education system has to do better in are

the areas of curriculum renewal and the speed with which we develop and react to change. If information is changing and expanding so rapidly in our society, then the school system has to learn how to deal with a lot of that change, and we have to learn how to deal with curriculum changes more quickly. Obviously, the present ministry policy provides a good basis and perhaps we simply need to fine-tune the present process.

On the point that is made in the middle of page 13, I suggest to you that there is an irony in education. As classroom teachers, three of us here before you have often wondered why success in education is measured by the distance one manages to achieve from the classroom. That, very definitely, is one of the criteria. The Ontario teachers' organizations are quite prepared, as professional people involved with the young people of this province, to take a responsibility for the success or failure of the school system, but only if we are in fact involved in planning what is happening in our schools.

If we are simply the passive recipients, as our document says, of a purely management view of what is best for education, then I think it is unfair that teachers share the responsibility for things that go amiss.

As we look towards the end of our document, I simply say to you that the 114,000 members of the Ontario Teachers' Federation accept our professional responsibility of improving the quality of education. It amazes me that people do not often know these kinds of statistics, but simply in terms of teachers who took upgrading courses—and the last year for which I had statistics available was 1985—we had 25,000. We are talking about committed people who are trying to do their best with young people on a daily basis.

I think the real challenge, as stated very clearly at the end of our document, is that what we have to do is in fact look at change, not as an event, not as a threat necessarily, but as a continuous process which derives from ongoing, collaborative relationships between government and the education community.

That concludes this part of the presentation. I hope that was not too long and that it permits us ample opportunity for the questions which we are looking forward to answering.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Certainly it was not too long. You have left us ample time for questions, and we appreciate that.

When you made the statement "everything old is indeed new," I was thinking along the other

lines, that everything new is indeed old, the old "History repeats itself" adage. I think some of your examples certainly show that.

We have Mr. Johnston to start the questioning.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the brief, which I think is a philosophical overview to what we are talking about but have difficulty coming to grips with on some of issues specifically, which your affiliates do not necessarily have difficulty coming to grips with but are often in conflict on.

One of the difficulties in being in the position of the Ontario Teachers' Federation is, how do you bring those things together? It struck me, as you were talking about it, that it poses a bit of a difficulty for us.

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If this select committee is going to try to deal with education over the next little while and for goodness knows how long—we have a mandate for this fall, but we are really trying to come to grips with how we are going to ask the Legislature for a larger mandate to go on and look at some of the big questions—there is the question of process, how to operate, as well as the question of process you have talked about, the role of teachers involved in decision-making around OSIS and other things in the past.

Do you have any thoughts to share on that, when the difficulties of our coming to a consensus in some ways are paralleled by the difficulties of OTF coming to a consensus on some of these matters, and yet there are some very big and important questions to be dealt with? I wonder if you have any advice for us in terms of process, in terms of how we operate with the teaching community on this. Clearly, if we were to take your affiliates and break down their lists of concerns and positions at this stage, they would be quite diverse.

Mr. Reycraft: That is not the first time that has happened.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is certainly not the first time that has happened.

For our purposes in operating with the teaching community from this point on, I am wondering what kind of advice you have for us in terms of our operation, not just like this when you are making a presentation but perhaps in other ways that we might work together in sharing information and some of the kinds of conflicting concerns.

After we pursue this a bit, I would really like to talk about some of the areas where there might be

consensus at the moment among the groups that we can start to build from.

Mr. Albert: I believe the strength of the school system is its base in the community. That is its strength. What we should be looking to achieve is what I call an open-door policy with the people in our community, the parents, business and other community groups, the labour unions and people who have an interest in what the schools have to offer. I suppose what we need to do is reflect that on a provincial basis as well.

It seems to me that as we come to grips with what is necessary on a provincial basis—and you have heard this in other presentations—others have come to Ontario to see our system and to borrow some things from our system; but Ontario is not just producing workers, Ontario is not just educating young people who will work only in Ontario, we are part of a global economy.

When we come to the parallel at the provincial level, I find it very difficult to suggest to you that even having people who can help us the best on the demographics, where the needs are in the workforce and what the needs will be in 10 years, would be very helpful to us because things shift so quickly and because young people as they grow up perhaps will choose not to continue to live or work in Ontario. So we are really caught in the macrosystem of what we do.

Obviously, the province has got to set the goal. I think the implementation has got to be worked out in what I call a more humanistic approach with the people who are our clients in our schools, the students and the parents probably having more of a say. The elementary schools, far more than the secondary schools, do a better job of integrating that concept and making school more meaningful, and it is more understandable to parents. Secondary schools tend to be intimidating. We call them institutions. We get into all kinds of specialization and, in fact, it becomes very difficult for parents to feel comfortable in those kinds of settings. If we could build in some of those things, I think it would help.

The other thing we have to recognize—and I do not know how we do this—is that if the majority of adults no longer have children who are in our school system and they simply see education as a tax burden and an inconvenience and if they are continually going to be dissatisfied because it is a product they no longer need or use, I do not know how you build those people into the process. Obviously, they have a voice, and they have a perception about our schools that needs to be taken into account. Mrs. Wilson, did you want to supplement anything to that?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Could I put the question to Mrs. Wilson, maybe in a more specific way around the committee, and see if I can get help with that?

Mrs. Wilson: Do you want me to try to answer your question?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The thing I would like to say is that at the end of October some time we are going to sit down with Bob Gardner's mammoth compilation of all the recommendations that we have received, with huge contradictions within them all, and try to come to some determinations, in whatever sense; probably very preliminary and cautious kinds of statements I would imagine. Before we do that, before we actually try to come to grips with that, it seems to me to be very useful to have had back from the collective group of teachers, the OTF, some notion of what may be the consensus on the things we are dealing with.

I do not know if as part of the process, for instance, it would be useful if the committee were to share the compilation of what we are going to be looking at as we try to come to some decisions with OTF, for OTF to consider and see what it can work out of that as consensus and what is still problematic or not. Are there things like this that we can be doing, in terms of our process being connected rather than just a group of politicians who hold some hearings and then go off and write a report?

Mrs. Wilson: I think we were assuming that in the process you are in you would do that. I think it is a fair request to us to identify areas where you have opinions divergent from those of the teachers and the public and to ask us if we can look at specific things again and identify where there is cohesion and where there continues to be disagreement. I should tell you that when we put this particular brief together, it was deliberately written as a general brief. We decided to leave your specific questions to the affiliates at this stage. The brief was written by a committee with representatives from all of the affiliates to sort of set a framework for discussion more than anything else. In fact, I think as the committee talked it was running on the assumption that as your work developed the federation would be requested to comment and come back.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If I can follow this train of thought a little bit on some of the really tough ones, in terms of coming up with a consensus, let's take streaming as an example. OSSTF has already done its internal investigation and has a process under way of review. The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association has taken a position for the committee and has yet to

take that back to its membership for major ratification, but felt that it was very important for it to come with a policy statement on it based on a research document by Dr. Dixon. Is it possible to see us developing any format to look at questions like that together?

In looking at experience, one of the things I am struck by is the fact that, not to make this too long a preamble, the Waterloo separate board has developed a policy of ability groupings and other kinds of groupings, of heterogeneous classes. Other systems within, say the public system, have very long histories of streaming and different kinds of schools—basic schools, etc., as well as comprehensives.

Is there any chance of bringing together in discussions and workshops between ourselves as legislators and the federation, perhaps through your auspices, some kind of discussion around the nitty-gritty of these things, to talk about some of the misconceptions that there seem to be on all sides about what people are doing? Is there some way we can—following from this process, because I do not think we are going to come up with a consensus on streaming by the time we are finished these hearings—look at it in another way, a more practical way for us, with you after this round of hearings?

Mr. Albert: On behalf of OTF, certainly we, as the umbrella group, can undertake to bring the affiliates together to discuss the issue. Streaming is a currently in-vogue topic, I guess. I am not sure, in terms of consensus, that in an education system that is supposed to pride itself on flexibility and adaptability you need one answer in every school board and every situation. I will go back to what I said to you before: while it is fair to say that OTF is neutral on streaming, if you are going to look at streaming or destreaming, then perhaps school boards need to be encouraged to look at a totally mainstream system, mainstreaming in some subjects and some grades, continuing to stream with more ladders or simply streaming basic vocational programs and making sure you have ladders.

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Let me share something on a personal basis with you on streaming. While philosophically I understand the concern that we are dead-ending some young people, and that gives me a lot of concern as an educator, I think what persuaded me the most to think this one through and not be just totally emotional on it was the study Alan King did for the Ontario secondary schools in 1985, *The Adolescent Experience*. In it, King found that it really was only in the vocational

school setting that these young people found success. In fact, they stayed in school and their self-esteem was raised.

I am not denying that perhaps we need more ladders into general programs and other possibilities. “‘Leave us alone,’ Ajax students say” was a headline in the *Toronto Star* on the weekend. I thought it was a very moving article. It suggests that these young people find some success in these kinds of schools, are able to participate in activities like student councils, be members of basketball teams and volleyball teams and be part of a yearbook staff. These are opportunities they would not have in a fully destreamed system.

Dead-ended? I am not sure it is dead-ended. Again, I wonder if we have not maybe just reacted emotionally. Maybe one of the things we need to do as a profession is to test our theories on this in very practical ways, in different settings across the province, in different ways as I have already explained to you.

In terms of your very direct question to OTF, there would certainly be no unwillingness on our part to try to pull all our groups together to see what consensus we could share with you on some of these things, knowing full well that some of the answers may simply be that we need to go out and field test it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I do not think any of us are trying to presume what the answer is going to be on this, but it is a process I am trying to see us establish. The idea, for instance, of the one group of public trustee boards which is going to be developed this weekend and yourselves and representatives of the Catholic boards all coming together with us to try to work out some kind of process for looking at that would be a useful thing from our perspective.

It might actually be ground-breaking in terms of that kind of co-operation, which usually does not exist. Legislative committees usually have hearings and then write reports. They either just collect dust, like many reports, or get used for one purpose or another. But on issues like the ones that are complicated and convoluted, in the sense that they all interact with each other, I think for our purposes it might be useful to look at some ongoing kind of process and interaction, which we have never done before. I just throw that out to you to consider.

Mr. Reyecraft: I want to follow up on what Mr. Johnston has been inquiring about. One of the things I do not have a sense of at all is how the consultation process that is used here between the ministry and the teaching profession compares with that which is used in other jurisdictions. I

think back to the extensive SERP-ROSE-OSIS consultation, something that took several years. Obviously, there is a need for very extensive and thorough education in a province like Ontario, but are there other models that we perhaps could learn from in other jurisdictions, that would perhaps give us advice on how to improve the consultation process?

Mrs. Wilson: I do not think there are better models anywhere. In fact, I must say that in general, in my experience over the last 15 years, the ministry specifically and school boards have struggled to improve the consultative process. I think we all accept the theory that involvement of the people who are going to have to carry out a change is the only effective way to get the change actually operating in the schools.

Having said that, sometimes the belief works more as a belief than in practice. You get glitches when we get a speech from the throne that says everybody is going to be tested and then we all struggle back from that. When the provincial committee on evaluation policies and practices was created, it was created after the great announcement that there was going to be something. While you are struggling back to the stage where a committee will look at the situation rationally, the school system—the teachers, the trustees, the administrators—is dealing with the fallout of the newspaper headlines from the speech from the throne.

That is a very difficult thing for us to handle at times because some of the situations leave us with ongoing political debris. While I am aware of the political process and know that one can never avoid that kind of accident, it should be avoided as much as possible.

Mr. Mahoney: We have the same problem.

Mrs. Wilson: Yes, I know, if you get a surprise.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is the Liberal caucus.

Mrs. Wilson: I have been in situations where the politician has said, "He said what?"

It is difficult, because education finds it very easy to make the headlines. I have said that I think people are struggling to improve the situation. Certainly in the area of curriculum guidelines, it is improving. But despite our best efforts—for instance, after SERP, since it came up—to advise that it was the general-level guidelines that were most needed—and there was consultation within SERP in terms of what was needed; there was a consensus on what was

needed—the advanced-level guidelines came out first.

Then you begin to wonder whether the consultation was effective. I can understand all the struggles internally that cause that sort of thing to happen. But that is a frustration. Consultation that does not go anywhere is useless.

So there are two examples. One I think is working well and the other works sometimes.

Mr. Reycraft: I am sure whenever it appears that one party is slipping—the government side is slipping—you will be quick to advise us.

Mrs. Wilson: Of course.

Mr. Mahoney: I think the answer to what both former questioners were looking for came up in Sudbury when two delegations referred to systems that were working rather well in Florida. I think they would have liked to get an answer from you that we should all go to Florida to discuss this.

Interjections.

Mr. Mahoney: After Reno. I did not go to Reno.

We have really had a tremendous range of deputants before us. In the earlier hearings, we had a number of people from the business community who came in and made some rather interesting statements. I remember one group suggesting that when a kid graduates from grade 12, he should have a quest for excellence, at 17 years old.

I think Richard did a survey in his riding. One of the questions on it was, "Do you think you had a better education than your kids are getting today?" A large percentage of people thought they did in fact have a better education. They perceived that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The longer ago it was.

Mr. Mahoney: That is right. The memory is great.

We get statements that we have graduates who cannot fill out application forms, the whole illiteracy problem. Then we get the other side of the coin, where the professionals working in the education industry make statements such as you have made today that we are doing a good job in educating our young people. I happen to lean on that side but I just wonder how you answer those questions. I think my kids are getting a much better education today than I ever got.

Mr. McGuinty: Well, I hope so.

Mr. Mahoney: At least in the classroom, Dalton. Get me out of this, will you?

Mr. Albert: I was tempted to bring one of those statements, which you have probably seen from some other group along the way, that this generation is going to hell in a handbasket and there is no hope for it. The author of that quotation was Plato.

I happen to have been born in 1948, have gone through the education system and have children who are teenagers and in the school system. We did a good job of educating people. We did a good job of educating the baby boomers. We trained them to be critical consumers. They received the best education of any generation in this country and because they are critical consumers, they expect more from everything—from education, from government, from the courts—and I think that is terrific. We now have those critical consumers as parents of the young people in our school system. They have every right to expect the best they can get from the schools.

1640

At the same time, a lot of the headlines generated in newspapers deal with the negative side of schools. It seems to be that that is news. Good news does not travel as well.

In terms of the argument about standards, people filling in forms, my father used to give me the same argument as he drove me to school as a high school student, that those were the kind of people he saw coming through the door in his day. I think the real test for us as a society is whether the people who leave our schools, either because they go to a job to work or go to college, university or whatever they do, do find a place in our society.

Do they find a place where they can work? Do they find a place where they can be personally happy? In terms of many other jurisdictions, by and large, our young people do very well. We do not have high unemployment rates. We are able to have people who are personally and professionally happy and satisfied in their lives.

I suppose it depends on the standard we want to use. I did have—it is the mischief maker in me—an inclination to bring into this group sample questions in the areas of mathematics, English, science, geography and history, five questions in each of those areas, and say, "Well, fill that out and let's see how well we do," because much of that kind of criticism is often based only on what I think is one of the lowest areas of real education. It is factual retention and being able to repeat only facts. It is not necessarily analysis or synthesis or the higher learning skills.

My own experience has been that the teacher's ability to evaluate students is still the single best criterion of success outside school or after school. What we have to look at is in fact the number of students we are educating today in comparison to other generations. In the 1950s, two per cent of young people went on to university. Today it is 12 per cent to 14 per cent. As a society, are we doing better? I would say we are.

Madam Chairman: Perhaps part of the answer to Mr. Mahoney's question was given by Walter Pitman back in our July hearings when he said: "Are kids today worse educated than they were when we went to school? We like to think we are well educated but let's not confuse facts with nostalgia." I think a lot of us do look back on our wonderful education with a certain amount of nostalgia and think we were quite well educated. But I look at my own children in today's system and they have certainly had a much broader education experience. I think they are better educated than I was; not only that, they will end up being fluent in two languages. Our current system certainly has a lot to offer.

After that little epistle or whatever it was, we will go to Mr. McGuinty, who will provide us with a further epistle.

Mr. McGuinty: Of very small calibre. First, an observation. This has been talked of before. I was a little disappointed that the report is very general, but I guess the reason is the reason you cite: it was contributed to by a number of people.

I am always reminded of the old story of the fellow who rushes in to see a busy businessman with the news, "Lindbergh just flew the Atlantic alone." The guy did not take his eyes off his document and the fellow repeated, "One man alone flew the Atlantic." The guy looked up and said: "Alone, one man can do anything. When a committee flies the Atlantic, let me know."

Mr. Keyes: We might be able to do that.

Interjections.

Interjection: Dalton, tell us a story.

Mr. McGuinty: About the happiest years of my life that I spent in grade 9?

First, from time to time when I used to have arguments with my wife I would interject to say: "Let's get this straight. I'm on your side." When you speak of the teacher in the classroom, on the firing line, as perhaps the one best qualified with insights to make judgements about education, I agree completely. I say that to you and you do not even live in my riding. The understanding of what goes on in the schools, or misunderstanding

perhaps, varies directly with the distance the person is removed from the classroom.

In two places in your brief, you reiterate that, "OTF believes strongly that consultative process between and among government and the education agencies is vitally necessary." That is on page 3. Then you return to that on page 13 where you say, "OTF believes that the teaching profession should be more directly involved in the curriculum decision-making process, both centrally and at the board level, through every stage from strategic planning, curriculum policy development, implementation strategies, evaluation of program, the selection and training of key change agents in the implementation process and all other related matters." Despite the dangling participle and the misuse of the subjunctive, that is a very loaded sentence.

"Curriculum has no life except in the interaction that occurs in the teaching-learning contexts within our system. The teaching profession, as the service arm of the education system, is not seeking 'ownership' of the curriculum process, but rather a well-defined and meaningful partnership." That is an excellent statement.

In my experience as a trustee for some 16 years on a major board and as vice-chairman of that board, one of the things that distressed me constantly is the atmosphere of confrontation that exists between the board and the teachers. This resulted in part, in my own situation, from a very unpleasant strike we had two years ago, and I am not making a judgement about that. The hang-over is there, but that attitude prevailed even before then.

I set up a committee, as vice-chairman of that board during that 16-year term, a trustee-teacher committee, and it came to absolutely naught because the board would not authorize it to make any meaningful decisions or even to have motions and, rightfully and understandably, the teachers became disillusioned with it.

It always distressed me that we have not got at the board level this kind of meaningful co-operation. Again, I say I think it is absolutely indispensable because I agree completely: the teachers in the classroom are the ones on the firing line who know from day to day. They have the get-wise-quick experts from 200 miles away—expert: "X" as in unknown factor, and "spurt" from the grip under pressure—with their constant pursuit of change for the sake of change.

I can understand—and one of the ladies just alluded to this—the frustration teachers must feel having this imposed, reading about it in the

papers: teachers, the convenient whipping posts for all the ills of society.

What do you think can be done? From talking with other trustees from other parts of the province, I think the experience I had—a sad experience in the Ottawa area—is fairly typical elsewhere. What do you think we can do? As a politician, I would like to contribute to that. I would like to go back to my trustee colleagues and most of the teachers in our system—most of them in the Ottawa system are my former students. I was a teacher myself for 31 years; I could never find a job either.

Mr. Mahoney: You still have not.

Mr. McGuinty: I have been unemployed ever since.

On a point of order, Madam Chairman: Would you explain to our guests that we must tolerate the small wit of our colleague?

1650

Madam Chairman: Mr. McGuinty, I do not think you want the chair to comment on the wit in this committee.

Mr. McGuinty: Could you comment on that? I know you are aware of it, have talked about it and are concerned about it. What can we do to help in that matter?

Mr. Albert: I think the point you addressed regarding a strike is obviously something that sometimes mitigates against those real joint co-operative efforts that can be productive in the area of curriculum and program. However, what I would say to you is to keep doing what you are trying to do. In fact, our experience is such that since Bill 100 in 1975, I do not think there has been a school board that has gone through a second strike. We either get immunity after the first one or we learn and we mature in terms of our relationships and our dealings with one another. Perhaps both teachers and school boards are mature enough to set aside the kind of differences that may separate us at the bargaining table from time to time and to work in the areas that we both passionately care about, and that is the best delivery of education to our children and the young people in our care.

I simply hope you do not become disheartened by it. Your apparent sense of humour leads me to speculate that you will not. I always remind people that a diamond was a lump of coal that made good under pressure; so hopefully the stressful situations in local boards do give us some jewels eventually. My description of the classroom force is that those really are the foot soldiers in the war against ignorance. If you want

to know how to effect change and how to keep young people entertained in an age where they are constantly bombarded with TV and other media-type of entertainment, then look to your teaching first, because certainly the challenges teachers compete against in the larger society just keep increasing every day. We need to work co-operatively and let's hope we keep doing so.

Mr. McGuinty: So the diamond is the result of coal under pressure and there is still hope for members of this parliament.

Mr. Albert: You said that.

Madam Chairman: I was looking at Mr. Albert's face when Dalton McGuinty was talking about dangling participles, and now you might understand how I felt as a brand-new rookie member of the Legislature, way back in November. I was standing up giving my maiden speech when, minutes before, Dalton leaned over and said, "Would you like me to correct your grammar?"

I would very much like to thank the OTF for coming before us today and sharing the benefit of its wisdom and experience with us. We apologize for Mr. McGuinty. There is nothing we can do with him.

Our next presentation will be by Dr. Margarete Wolfram. Please come forward, Dr. Wolfram. As members are waiting for Dr. Wolfram to be seated, they will note that the ministry has provided the information requested by Mr. Johnston this morning. We are indeed getting fine service from them. I was expecting an accolade from Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Absolutely.

Madam Chairman: I would like to welcome you to our committee. We have allocated a half-hour for your presentation, which includes time for the members to ask questions, so we hope you can take maybe 15 minutes for the presentation itself so that there will be sufficient time. If that is impossible, even if you can highlight some of the brief to make time for questions, we would very much appreciate it. Perhaps you would begin by introducing yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard and then begin whenever you are ready.

CONCERNED PARENTS OF ETOBICOKE

Mrs. Kannert: I am Anne Marie Zeller Kannert and I will be introducing Dr. Wolfram. I am a member of Concerned Parents of Etobicoke.

Mr. Patterson: My name is Alyn Patterson and I am also a member of Concerned Parents of Etobicoke.

Dr. Wolfram: I am Margarete Wolfram of York University and consultant for the group of Concerned Parents of Etobicoke.

Just to set the scene, we heard the tail end of the previous presentation's discussion, part of which we certainly agree with, but we might focus more on the hole than on the doughnut.

Mrs. Kannert: As a member of Concerned Parents of Etobicoke, it is my privilege to introduce Dr. Margarete Wolfram, course director of educational psychology at York University and educational consultant to our group.

Our organization was formed last year because of concerns that were felt to be related to the philosophy and practices of the present Ontario primary program and which were evidenced by the deterioration of our children's schooling. Increasing dearth of content, structure and feedback were taking its toll on the quality of our children's work. We knew our children were not learning at a level appropriate to their abilities.

We saw many of these issues addressed in the Radwanski report of last year, especially in the sections on primary grades, and we concurred with many of his recommendations but felt that a deeper understanding of how we had arrived at the present state of affairs would be necessary if future mistakes were to be avoided and new methods based on sound research and empirical evidence of their effectiveness were to be found.

When our group asked the ministry last year for empirical proof that a child-directed, play-based program was superior to a teacher-directed program, we were told that no such statistics were available. We found it astounding that a new program, the play program, could have been implemented in our area without any proof of its effectiveness and without informing parents of the coming on stream of a totally new approach. Where did the notion that play was the basis for learning even come from?

In our search for knowledgeable, qualified researchers who could answer our questions, we discovered that there existed at York University specialists in educational psychology who had not only worked with the leading figures of 20th century educational theory, such as Jean Piaget, André Rey and others on whose work much of the primary programs were supposedly based, but who were also able to explain to us how many of these theories had often been misunderstood, generalized, oversimplified and were being applied in an indiscriminate and distorted way. Dr. Wolfram is one of those people.

Others in her department, such as Juan Pascual-Leone and his school, have refined

many aspects of these early theories and disproved others. He and other researchers, such as Reuven Feuerstein in the United States, have gained profound new insights into how children learn and have reached astonishing results with poor performers; yet none of their important work has been integrated into Ontario's present educational structure. As Canadians, we have somehow typically not looked in our own backyard for expert advice.

Dr. Wolfram can enlighten us then as to why the present philosophy and its various applications, while so overwhelmingly pro-child in theory, are not bearing fruit in practice and what steps can and should be taken to remedy the situation. The primary program is, after all, the foundation upon which students' further learning is built. We have no time to lose. Our children deserve the very best we can give them.

1700

Dr. Wolfram: I will specifically address myself to the dropout rate, which has been mentioned in the Radwanski report. The basic thesis I would like to propose here is that the dropout rate results from two major sources. The first one is inappropriate stimulation. There is inappropriate streaming towards low-challenging programs. So far, there is still a low acceptance of the fact that children need mental stimulation. The old learning theory approach was that people needed food, drink, sex and relief from pain, but stimulation came in only much later.

Many of the children who are in the school system are bored. Sometimes, if they take courses and fail courses, the next thing they are being told is: "Maybe this course was too difficult for you. Take something easier." I would like to criticize the streaming that we have at present because it does not really foster children who want to go fast and are precocious. Such children still have to wait until or if they make the gifted grade and quite often they do not because, as in our school, for instance, gifted assessment takes place only in grade 3. By that time, many of them have become inactive, their lights have virtually gone out and they underachieve. They will not make it and, therefore, will continue to be unstimulated.

My position is that a lot of the streaming that takes place is towards making the child go slower than he might and normally catering to the child's going at his own rate, which quite often results in his slowing down until he grinds to a halt. My own child had to repeat grade 1 because he was a slow reader. At the end of grade 2, he still had not

even mastered the material and was just told that this was his own rate.

Another reason that streaming and inappropriate streaming occurs is that, although we quite agree that in many respects this system is far superior to what there used to be, the system that was based on reproductive learning, lots of trials and little understanding—there is no question about that; it is much better—there are a number of holes in the system. There are a number of points where it is not functioning. To that extent, where these aspects exist, what happens is that parents step in. They step in to the extent that they are able to, and the one who steps in is the parent who is educated. Those families step in where there are lots of resources, such as a two-parent family which can afford to help the child. A one-parent family is already overburdened; so that child will not be helped as easily. People from well-to-do families will go through with the help of the parents.

I asked one of my third-year psychology classes how much help the students did get when they learned to read. Six per cent said they had no help outside school; 54 per cent said they had some help; 30 per cent said they had a substantial amount of help, in the sense that they did not think they could have done without it; and 10 per cent said they learned outside school, usually because they were either way ahead and they learned before entering school or because they had such a terrible time that somebody stepped in from the outside and taught them.

The question to be asked is, what happens to the immigrant family which does not speak English or what happens to the child whose parents have trouble reading? We should not forget that many of these learning disabilities do have a hereditary component, and it is not at all uncommon that a child who has a hard time learning to read has parents who had a hard time learning to read, as I found out to my surprise when I worked as a school psychologist. Coming back to the point that parents bring in, the individual differences in those situations where the system is not working, why is it not working?

Again, I would like to emphasize that there have been numerous quite commendable innovations since the 1960s, much more emphasis on understanding, on rule learning, on independent exploration and all this sort of thing. However, there are a number of shortcomings.

The shift from a philosophy which was essentially empiricist, believing that everything comes from the outside, fell into disrepute in the 1960s. Then when the change came, people said:

"All right. This does not work. What else does work?" They looked around and they asked, "Who else advocates a different position?" And they found Piaget.

So now they try to follow Piaget, but Piaget had such an entirely different system that a lot of his views were misrepresented. They were taken out of context. It is very hard to read, which did not help either. Many English-speaking psychologists translated him—not only translated, but interpreted him, so more recent readers read the sort of secondhand sources and a lot of it got lost.

Another thing is, having been trained in an empiricist position left a lot of people with a distinct empiricist accent of some sort. It is a little bit like learning a new language. You cannot just shed your old one and step into a new one. You do keep the accent. This is what seems to have happened.

Two situations occurred. For one thing, there was a very strong leaning in the opposite direction, nativist: "Mother Nature will do it. Things will come in their own time." That was one message. The other one was, strangely enough, that a lot of the empiricist practices remained with sort of a background belief that it all comes from the outside.

There was one big difference, though, in that the background now, the outside world, was the environment, no longer the teacher. The teacher stepped back and said: "All right, now you explore. You do your thing. Here are all the gadgets and the materials you can interact with."

So what we end up having is an environment which is very rich in material things. There is no question that nowadays classrooms are far better equipped than they used to be, but on the other hand, the teacher keeps completely back.

Here, again, is another bias coming from the previous empiricist position. There is a very strong underestimation as to how complex the world really is. We, as adults, look at it and we already impose our organization, the organization of things we have made, and we think the child will pick it up. Yet there are many other ways for the child to interpret it aside from not interpreting it at all.

This is a situation, sort of being surrounded by an environment maybe with lots of opportunity to explore, but no adult who really says, "Look, this is how you do it." This situation, not having an adult around, occurred in a number of circumstances, especially in Israel. Through the ravages of war, children were separated from their parents and from significant adults who could

interpret the culture to them. As a result, they ended up performing extremely poorly.

It was André Rey who was called to give some advice as to what was the matter. "These children, are they really as retarded as they perform or is there something else?" What André Rey found was that these children were not at all retarded. They were pseudo-retarded, as he called them. They performed as though retarded, but they had a lot of potential. They had potential like anybody else. They could learn fast. What had been missing was, as he calls it, a human mediator who transmits human cultures and transmits cultural civilization skills to the young one. So quite extensive efforts have been made by Feuerstein and his people to bring about the re-education of these people.

1710

I was really quite shocked when I heard that at least in my school board, nobody ever heard of Feuerstein; and not only that, but it is exactly the conditions that existed through the accidents of war and hardship that brought about this pseudo-retardation in places such as the Middle East; similar conditions are actually being enforced and promoted in our schools. Teachers are standing back and saying, "Well, he will have to discover this by himself." We come back to reinventing the wheel and it is going to take a very long time.

There were a number of situations where, again, this enormous trust comes from the native's position—Mother Nature will do it. I have here some quotes from Sharon Abbey, in a 1987 newsletter from the Federation of Women Teachers' Association of Ontario. On page 7, she says: "Remember, there are very few children who grow up not learning to read and write. Trust your child. He will do it too, but in his own time."

One thing this lady does not know, nor cares to know about is how many children learn to read because they come out of school and the parents sit down with them and say: "Look here, you're not going to join the league of illiterates. You're going to learn to read." A lot of parents work with their children at home. I suppose we all know many who do not know how to read. There are too many, way too many.

In another quote here, the Board of Education for the City of Etobicoke insists in its guidelines that, "The child must be allowed to acquire the skills and competence for reading and writing in the same natural way as a child learned to walk and talk." They came out with that in their 1988 guidelines.

The sad fact is that Mother Nature does not have it in her work order to teach reading and writing, because reading and writing are fundamentally different from learning to walk and talk. People have been walking and talking for two million years, but reading and writing are very recent. I think we found they first appeared 3,500 years ago. Now, that is recent.

Furthermore, even then it was not widely used. It was used by a few people. It was only 500 years ago when Luther translated the Bible and the printing press was invented that reading and writing became a little bit more widespread. Luther, having gone through the trouble of translating the Bible and it was printed, wanted it read. He instituted the public school system.

Here again, there is something that can be learned from this. Luther instituted the public school system, or rather, argued in its favour. He wanted a public school system because, he said, it is up to the parents. A lot of parents do their best. They educate their children and so on. However, there are numerous people who either cannot or will not. It is because we want to have an educated society, and it is in the interest of society—even those who do not have children have an interest in living in a society that is educated. Just to mention the comments of one of the previous speakers, he said, if I may paraphrase, children have gone through the school system and maybe these people do not have the same involvement with the process.

I think living in an educated society or not is a concern to everybody, whether they have children in the school system or not. It makes a big difference whether you live in an environment where people know how to vote, where they exercise intelligent judgement and so on. There is no question that the process is so profoundly different between learning to walk and talk versus learning to read and write that we are due for failure if we want to leave it to nature. Something has to be done.

We have a few things where you can see some examples of a child being indeed left on his own. I think there is one example of a child—grade 1, grade 2. You see how pitifully little progress is made there.

One reason there is so little progress made is because teachers are so reluctant to give any feedback. They say: "It might hurt his ego. He might feel bad about it." Again, many of us, including myself, have been trained in the sense that if you make a mistake, it is marked in red and you end up with this nice composition you wrote really dripping in red ink. That is a put-off. It

really dampens people's spontaneity to be treated that way. There is no need to be so repressive. Feedback does not have to be punitive. Punitive feedback is not effective. It should not be punitive, not because it is not nice but because it just is not effective. But feedback certainly is absolutely essential. There is no way of going on without it.

Let me now go into one other aspect, feedback at the level of the education system. Not only do children not get enough feedback, but the education system as such is not really getting much feedback either, and when it gets it, it does not much appreciate it. It is the parents knocking at the door and saying: "What's happening? My child doesn't know how to read and write."

We have been hearing a lot about evaluation. Should there be evaluation? A lot of people argue that there should not be because evaluation tests the product and what we are after, really, is not the product but the process. I find it very difficult to see any incompatibility between process and product.

Surely, a process which cannot manifest itself by some superior product is a process which may not be worth using. Granted, there are situations where an intelligent mistake occurs. All right, but it came about through an intelligent process; those things do happen. Granted, also, one should not be too fast in instituting evaluation.

Take the example of somebody learning to type with two fingers or with 10 fingers. If you were behind him and said, "I want speed," he is going to do it with two fingers most probably. I would, anyway. However, why are 10 fingers more appropriate than two? Because in the long run, it is going to produce a better product, no question about it. If that were not the case, people would type not with 10 fingers but with two.

This means one should not really shower a child with evaluations. I remember back in my own studies in Geneva that I did not have any examinations for the first year, but after the first year there was a big examination. Again, this argument that evaluation, standardized tests would promote reproductive learning, would create a little robot, depends very much on what is being asked. I remember being told at my high school in Germany, "If you remember everything you have been told, you'll be just passing, but certainly not more." It is up to whoever makes up the exam to ask intelligent questions.

I just want to make the point that some people say: "The process is important because we're not concerned with facts and with skills that are appropriate right now in the present system. We

want to prepare our children for the future, for the world to come. The world to come is going to be so different."

I just cannot help having this little story of the emperor's new clothes pop up in the back of my head. When is that new world going to come? For which world will the processes we train the child in be appropriate? If not for the present, which one?

1720

One thing we obviously will produce is a certain attitude: This world is not worth adapting to. When the next big change comes, maybe that will not be worth adapting to, either. We create an insensitivity to the requirements of the situation. I know one little boy who, after having done his own spelling for two years, now is considering suing the system—the government, to be precise—because it makes things so complicated.

Mr. Mahoney: He ought to figure it out himself.

Dr. Wolfram: Yes, right; maybe he should.

When it comes to evaluation, there is one thing we should keep in mind. Everybody talks about evaluating the students. One should evaluate the system. I handed out a graph here. I am doing some research actually on a different issue, on the effect of modelling, and I stumbled over this enormous discrepancy in the number of failures and successes in different sections of one and the same psychology course.

The question is: Do some people, just by chance, really have so many more incapable students in their classes, or could it possibly be that they use the wrong textbook, the wrong time slot? Maybe even they did not know how to teach. These things do happen too.

Madam Chairman: I do not like to interrupt. I just want to let you know that we have only about two minutes left and I know Mr. McGuinty indicated he has a question.

Dr. Wolfram: All right.

Mr. McGuinty: Thank you. I was interested in your comments about feedback in the schools. When I was a child, I lived on a farm and I was always interested in the feedback I got from my teachers. I thought of it in the same terms as I would feed the cattle at night before I went to bed, and before I went to school, I would get the feed back when I cleaned out the byre.

Dr. Wolfram: Yes, there is no system without it.

Mr. McGuinty: Yes, that is right. When you are talking about the background being so

important, I know you are familiar with the most comprehensive study of education ever conducted in North America, which was a report commissioned by the United States Senate some years ago, the Coleman report. It proved rather conclusively that the most important single determining factor in conditioning the child's attitude towards learning and what he got from the school was not the building or the class size or whether they had black greenboards or green blackboards or even the academic qualifications of teachers, but rather the disposition towards learning which the child brings to the school from the home. I think that is a fact we must contend with, and a difficult one.

My daughter is a teacher. After going through, up to the master of arts program and teachers' college, I think the best learning experience she had was almost the first day in class teaching grade 2. She told the child, "Take this home and have your mother help you to read," and the child replied, "My mother cannot read."

A little time after that she had the parents in one evening, and she was having trouble with one of the children's language. She mentioned to his mother, "I am having trouble with little Stevie's language." Appropriately, his name was Stevie. The mother replied, "It's none of your God-damned business how my kid talks."

Mr. Mahoney: It was my mother too.

Mr. McGuinty: My question is—on page 7 of your statement here, the 1987 newsletter, Sharon Abbey—is that the name of a church or a person?

Dr. Wolfram: That is, I think, the vice-principal of some school.

Mr. McGuinty: The statement says: "Remember, there are very few children who grow up not learning to read and write. Trust your child. He will do it too, but in his own time." Then later on, the Board of Education for the city of Etobicoke: "The child must be allowed to acquire the skills and competence for reading and writing in the same natural way as the child learned to walk and talk."

Doctor, you must be putting us on.

Dr. Wolfram: That is what it says.

Mr. McGuinty: Please say it is not so.

Dr. Wolfram: Sorry.

Mr. McGuinty: Basically, there are actually—

Dr. Wolfram: They do say that, and numerous—

Mr. McGuinty: They even misspell the word "r.i.g.h.t."?

Dr. Wolfram: Yes, they do. No kidding.

Mr. McGuinty: You have upset me.

Dr. Wolfram: It hurts. I know.

Many of us have, at different school board meetings, heard this saying, that it will come naturally, that the child learned to walk and talk, and he will learn to read and write. There seems to be somebody—they are repeating it. I have not been able to track this down. Many people say that, but there must be somebody they are taking it from and I have not found that one yet.

Mr. McGuinty: Incredible. One is a mechanical reflex, a muscular action, and the other is an abstraction. They are completely divorced. I am just flabbergasted.

Dr. Wolfram: Of course. The speech code cannot be broken without somebody—

Mr. McGuinty: Surely.

Dr. Wolfram: Anyway, I am not sure. I thought it might come from the ministry. I am searching.

Mr. McGuinty: Oh, no. I will defend the ministry. Not even the Tory ministry would put this out. No, I am sure we have to find another

culprit. Steve did you ever write anything on education philosophy?

Mr. Mahoney: Actually, I was going to ask a question. This would be supplementary to that.

Interjection.

Mr. Mahoney: I know we are late and we all have—I certainly have an appointment tonight, but I just wondered in what context it was written because any statement that is made on its own, if it is not presented in the context of the overall report, can be—it seems so outrageous that I cannot believe that it is not out of context.

Dr. Wolfram: Do correct it when you get a copy.

Mrs. Kannert: We will provide you with the whole report, if you wish.

Dr. Wolfram: Now we know why we are having nightmares and you are not.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Dr. Wolfram, for your presentation today. The select committee on education stands adjourned until 10 o'clock on Monday in Windsor.

The committee adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

ERRATA

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E-15	E-791	1	38	Collins, Dr. Graham, Executive Director
E-16	E-824	2	48	Capital String Academy, he will tell you that is

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No. E-20

Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Organization of the Education Process

First Session, 34th Parliament

Monday, September 26, 1988



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday, September 26, 1988

The committee met at 10 a.m. in the Erie Room, Hilton Hotel, Windsor, Ontario.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning. Welcome to the hearings of the select committee on education as we look at the organization of the education system in Ontario. Specifically, we will be looking at streaming, semestering, grade promotion and OSIS. We are pleased to be in Windsor this morning. We have a fairly busy agenda, so I think we will get started right away.

We will begin with the Ontario Association of Education Administrative Officials. Would you please come forward? I promise not to try to call you the OAEAO, because if I do I am sure I will get the initials wrong. Welcome to our committee. We have allocated half an hour for your presentation, which includes question time from the members. We hope you will allow time at the end for questions. Perhaps in the first 15 minutes you could have your oral presentation and allow approximately 15 minutes for questions. Please begin whenever you are ready, and start by identifying yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS

Mr. Wells: Four of the people who are presenting at these seats met with the group in Toronto earlier. They are Jim Grant, a supervisory officer with the Brant County Board of Education; Earl Lozon, director of education of the Kent County Roman Catholic Separate School Board; Walter Willms, on the far right from my point of view, director of education for the Windsor Board of Education, and Allen Wells, director of education for the Lambton County Board of Education. Reflecting the interest of OAEAO in these proceedings, there are two other persons in the room. The president of OAEAO, Clifford Whitfield, and the executive director, John Boich, are in the front row. As well, there are numerous members of our association in the audience.

In the interest of time, we will begin with the discussion of the association on the first topic.

Mr. Grant: My name is Jim Grant, and I am a superintendent of schools with the Brant County Board of Education. It gives me pleasure this morning to be able to share our thoughts and ideas regarding streaming in our secondary schools with you. I will be reading parts of the material that you have before you in this brief and I will be commenting on parts of it as well as we go through it. I will not be reading the whole presentation.

To begin, there is little doubt that since the introduction of streaming into our secondary school programs, students have tended to be labelled as advanced, general or basic as much as the programs have. It was never the intent to label students but rather to label programs. This has been unfortunate as it has caused some students, and in some cases their parents, to make course selections based on these labels that they either wanted or wished to avoid. In addition, when students are separated into groupings or levels roughly according to abilities, interests or perhaps motivation, the students' greatest potential may not be stimulated as much as it would be if they were in more heterogeneous classes.

In fact, there has been little modification to the concept of streaming since it was introduced in the early 1960s. At that time, it was felt that students who had difficulty with the traditional academic subjects could enrol in a general-level program—at that time there were no basic-level programs—and not only enjoy more success but also take courses that would be more relevant to someone who was probably going to enter the workforce either before or after graduation.

It was obviously a feeling at that time, as it is today, that the opportunity to experience success would be a factor in retaining students in school until such time as they graduated. I would like to add that in the elementary school system or elementary panel, we want our students, and do everything we can for our students so they may, have that opportunity to experience success. This was to be perpetuated through the secondary system.

Unfortunately, today there is a greater number of students enrolled in basic- and general-level of courses leaving school without a diploma than is

the case with those enrolled in advanced-level courses. In other words, they have not experienced the success that was originally forecast for this group. One cannot conclude, however, that streaming is a singular cause for this or that it necessarily fosters students leaving secondary school without a diploma.

Let us, for a moment, look at what might happen if streaming were eliminated. If streaming were eliminated, the reasons for doing so should be very clear and should be very pedagogically sound. Generally speaking, students enrolled in basic- and general-level programs tend to need a sense of belonging. Would they have this if they were in classes with students who might intimidate them because of their abilities, experiences or in fact their interests?

If there were an absence of streaming, would those students who would have chosen either basic- or general-level programs participate in the dynamic process of learning to the extent that they would in the more homogeneous class groupings? Would a student, for example, who has had difficulty with school and perhaps does not have the same high self-image that those students who have had considerable success have been raising his hand to the teacher offering answers or even asking questions? Probably not.

Our current teachers have not been trained to teach to three levels in one class. In fact, OSIS specifically states that there shall not be more than two levels in any one class. We have a practical problem there.

I would like to comment for a moment on formal examinations. During the early to mid-1970s, doing away with formal examinations became quite popular in some of our boards and specifically in some of our schools. One way of eliminating formal exams was to lower exemption marks to as low as 50 per cent, and of course 50 per cent is all that is needed to gain a credit. That has changed around considerably since that time.

In fact, today formal exams are a mainstay in advanced-level courses, particularly at the senior level. Some schools, in fact I think I would be safe in saying many schools, have gone to compulsory formal exams. Yet we know that formal exams do not bring out the best in those students who have opted for basic- or general-level programs. In fact, a formal exam will often bring out the worst in these students in terms of their success in being objectively evaluated.

To get around this, steps are often taken by teachers to help students in such courses through

exams, by giving them an examination in a different format. It could be a brief written exam, it could be an exam with a practical component. Often, those students who have had difficulty expressing themselves in writing are given the opportunity to do their exam on a computer.

If we took away streaming, would lack of streaming mean no more formal exams? After all, as I said earlier, formal exams can be quite detrimental to some students. I would contend, and I think the OAEAO would contend, that the public in 1988 is not prepared to accept abolishing formal examinations.

There is a feeling among some educators, students, parents and the general public that streaming does not build up a student's feeling of self-worth, but erodes it. If I may comment on that, I think that streaming does perpetuate a belief system. A student who is enrolled in three general-level course and one basic-level course may feel that he or she is not as smart as that person over there who is enrolled in four advanced-level courses. It does tend to perpetuate that belief system. In some cases, it may perpetuate a belief system among staff as well.

However, what would be done for one's feeling of self-worth if he or she continually had to compete with students who are much more proficient, more articulate and able to express themselves well in written form? Would either the low or high achievers be satisfied in this situation? I think what we are referring to there is, how would the five per cent at the top and the five per cent at the bottom that you might find in a class where there was no streaming feel? Again, I hark back to the dynamic process of learning. Would the person who is now grouped with the high achievers feel that he can compete with them, not only on tests but also day to day verbally in class, and would the five per cent at the top be adequately challenged?

1010

The distinction among the three levels appears to be less critical in some subject areas than in others. Students taking courses that are necessary prerequisites to further study, particularly at university, need to be able to move along through a course at a suitable pace or they will probably be ill prepared for post-secondary programs.

I am not talking here just about the five per cent that I mentioned earlier but rather a larger group. As stated, this is particularly true of courses offered at the senior level—grades 11 and 12 and OAC.

If—and I qualify this—the present structure of offering three or more levels of difficulty in most

courses were to be retained, then there are present perceived weaknesses that need to be addressed in that structure. At present, our school organizations make it much more difficult to move to a higher level of difficulty than to a lower one.

I will just give you an example as to what I mean by that. If I am taking four advanced-level courses, math, English, science and history, and I am finding that the science is quite a struggle and I want to drop down, that is quite easily done if there is not a timetable conflict. I can drop down to a grade 10 general-level science quite easily. If I want to move up, however, that is much more difficult. It probably would mean that I would need to take some type of transition course, probably at summer school, in order to do that and to make it work successfully for me.

Also, steps could be taken to be much more innovative with timetabling than is currently the practice in many of our secondary schools. Such things as block timetabling, as an example, for a basic-level program could be done. Right now, with the credit system, that is difficult. It is difficult because some students are not clear passes in all their courses and, of course, some are at different levels, so it becomes somewhat of a timetabling nightmare.

Greater amounts of time and better strategies could be used to develop students' abilities and interests to cause them to want to function at a higher level. I think that is key. We want to cause our students to function at a higher level. We want them to become more effective students.

Streaming has served many useful purposes. To eliminate it completely—and the key word there is “completely”—would be a radical move with limited justification. There is flexibility in the present structure to address the weaknesses inherent within the streaming of secondary school students. Students need not be streamed in all courses or in all grades, but there are situations where, based on experience, one would conclude that some type of streaming works best; as an example, I would say particularly in the grades 11 and 12 and OAC years.

To abolish streaming without giving serious attention to the possibilities that are present within this format would be shortsighted.

Madam Chairman: Just before you go on, I would mention to the delegation that you are almost halfway through your presentation time and you have a considerable amount of your brief left. You might want to highlight so that you will get through the whole thing and still allow a small

amount of time for questions. It is up to you. You can use the time however you wish. I just thought I would mention that.

Mr. Willms: May I very briefly but very sincerely, being chief executive officer of one of the four boards in Windsor and in Essex county, welcome the select committee to Windsor.

Perhaps I can revert to my role here as a member of the Ontario association or OA.

Grade promotion: OA believes that the inherent needs and the best interests of students cannot be served by a strict application of grade promotions, as generally interpreted and commonly understood by the public. Learning is a lifelong pursuit and must be continuous. It is not a uniform process for all persons, nor is it a process that occurs progressively in a uniform, steady manner for any one person. Real learning occurs in the varied, appropriate expectations of individual pupil progress and achievement. It cannot be forced by a uniform common delivery of program nor by a uniform common expectation.

There is a myth that instruction in all subjects will somehow succeed if it is delivered to all students of all ages in the same systematic way that parts of industrial products, like bicycles and aircraft, are brought together and assembled with constant monitoring all along the production line. Although content might be categorized in defined units, grades or levels and in defined subjects, not all learners proceed through such categorizations at the same rate, at the same time or at the same age with the same degree of mastery. The Formative Years recognizes that integrated learning opportunities and expectations can at best be contained and described in terms of divisions.

OSIS recognizes that an individual might progress in any given year through various subjects at different levels or through various subjects at different grade or year designations. Not all pupils proceed at the same time at the same rate. Dividing content into packages called grades is an organizational technique designed to provide for administrative efficiency in a supposedly easily understood pattern. Such organization, if rigidly applied, has little, if any, resemblance to what may be absorbed or learned by any one individual in all subjects at a particular grade level in any 12-month period.

Children and adolescents learn at different rates and at different times in different subjects. Uniformity of expectation or achievement is not stated in The Formative Years nor is it implied,

even though there may be a commonality of program and delivery of program.

OSIS, through the credit system, makes provision for success or enhancement in learning in individual subjects at specified levels rather than requiring completion of entire packages or grades before moving on.

To promote or not to promote in terms of grade advancement is not the issue. If pupils are promoted to a higher grade and it is not recognized that they have not mastered all the skills or competencies that might normally be required for that grade, a disservice will be done to them.

Mandatory remediation will not resolve the problems. If pupils are not promoted to a higher grade to keep them with their social peers and instead are retained and are treated as though they have no affective needs, they will not be successful in cognitive learnings. Careful placement, with realistic expectations and appropriate teaching-learning activities or strategies are critical. The latter process will take into account current knowledge of learning theories and knowledge of child and adolescent behaviour and development.

Placement in divisions, bearing some homogeneity in chronological ages with individual recognition in heterogeneous programs, delivery of programs and expectations at the primary and junior levels and credit or promotion by subject at defined levels in the intermediate and senior divisions are positions supported by OA.

These positions recognize individual needs which can best be met by relevant support services and appropriate teaching-learning strategies. Lockstep grade promotions are irrelevant and inconsistent with current knowledge of educational processes. OA supports organizations that will enhance learning and will respect individual differences. These can better be accomplished without a strict adherence to what is commonly known as grade promotions.

1020

Mr. Lozon: My name is Earl Lozon. I am director with the Kent County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. I guess I was chosen to speak on semestering because of the wealth of experience I have in administering the secondary schools.

Anyway, speaking on behalf of the association, historically semestering is not a new structure. It is an American phenomenon that entered Canada through the western provinces and spread its way across. Ontario picked up on this structure in the early 1970s. More recently,

semestering has become the most popular form of school organization, and our traditional school year, which most of us have experienced, tends to play a secondary role as far as organization is concerned.

We are finding that semestering seems to have its popularity based on the fact of its flexibility. It seems to have advantages in relation to the students and the teachers. Certainly, those schools that move to a semestering structure tend not to move back, at least based on the experience we have seen. Students see it as being to their advantage because they are dealing with fewer subjects at any one particular time. It generally is perceived that they have less homework at any given time; I am not sure less, but certainly it would seem to be the fact that they are dealing with fewer subjects at one time and that this results in less homework.

Also, it gives students the opportunity to concentrate more specifically. It provides opportunities for teacher-student interaction at greater length, more opportunity for a variety of teacher learning experiences, and opportunities for out-of-school field trip activities because of the extra time provided.

Again, it is not without its disadvantages. Teacher preparation—we have talked about this in many different directions—has its impact on all areas we are talking about, and certainly more teacher professional development would have its advantage in allowing teachers to utilize the longer periods of time in a more beneficial way. I think teachers see it as providing an opportunity for less preparation and more concentration in the number of periods or subjects they are teaching at one time.

I might point out that another disadvantage is that because of the concentration, if time is lost on the part of either the teacher or the student, definitely more work is lost and it has a greater impact, although there seem to be no long-term ramifications that are evident as a result of this.

In the most ideal sense, we see semestering as providing an opportunity for full-course semesters, half-course semesters and also full-year courses. Innovative administrators can utilize all of those in a particular school and provide for a great variety to meet the various subject needs. This could eliminate some of the disadvantages of the discontinuity that exists in particular subjects such as math and languages.

It is our particular view that semestering is conducive to promoting a wide range of philosophical views and that it provides specific opportunities to achieve the goals of education as

outlined for the province. It is our view that the provincial government should continue to support the semestering structure and also encourage schools to be innovative and provide the support necessary to look at and deal with other structures.

One area we did not deal with is the school year calendar. The reason we did not specifically deal with that is that there has been the option for schools to request experimental school year calendars. Few, if any, that we are aware of, have really tried this in relation to altering the school year calendar. On that particular basis, we felt that it would not be in our best interest to recommend a calendar along that basis, but to leave the opportunity open for that sort of opportunity.

With that, I will conclude my part of the presentation.

Mr. Wells: I am Allen Wells. I believe I can summarize the last part in a very few words.

It may be slipping from memory that OSIS, Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions, the book that guides education for students from grade 7 and above, originated in a very lengthy consultative process just under a decade ago. It was devised in order to meet criticisms of education and its products, which were widespread at that time, about student behaviour, their ability to fit into the workforce and so on. Some of those problems may be less critical now than they were then, but it is also important to note that the students who graduated under OSIS did so less than 90 days ago. It is very difficult to determine strengths and weaknesses of a program when the students who took part in it are just now learning to cash their paycheques.

A great deal of good from an educational point of view has gone on in the process of trying to establish courses of study to meet different student needs. That is a process that is still continuing, in which I see a good deal of promise.

There were a large number of subjects dealt with in the brief that were also addressed by OSIS, with respect to sex equity, multiculturalism and so on, that are important in the education system in Ontario.

Finally, OAEAO would see, because of the thought that went into it originally and the short period of time to judge it, that the way forward in Ontario is by modifications to the basic premises contained in the book rather than a revolutionary new approach to education at this time.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. I would like to congratulate the delegation on being able to

présenté its brief so effectively to allow time for questions. We have quite a few members who have indicated an interest. We will start with Mr. Johnston and Mr. Reycraft.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for your brief. My question is primarily on the matter of streaming. Thank you for a very balanced sort of presentation on that. If I could and if we had more time, I would go into a lot of detail around your presumptions about some of the problems of heterogeneity when you get to high school, which do not seem to be problematic in most of the elementary schools in terms of the sense of the child's worth and that kind of thing.

I want to put the point to you that what we are hearing now, and we are hearing it here in Windsor, I notice, by the Essex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board's presentation, that there is a major division of opinion on streaming.

The Catholic community, by and large, is coming to us and basically saying that it is opposed to the streaming system. Even the union is saying, with a lot of caveats about training and other things, that it would prefer to see a destreamed system. We are getting some people saying that they would at least like to see it destreamed between grades 9 and 10. Then we are getting a lot of people who are coming before us saying: "Do not change it. Keep the streaming system much as it is and try to increase the transitional opportunities, the lack of which have made it such a rigid system in the past."

I guess my question is this: since we are getting this kind of diverse opinion brought forward at this point, is it possible for your association to give us a short comment now, but more important, to give us your opinion and maybe a paper on how the two models could be established in Ontario at the secondary level with the constraints of OSIS, and what kind of model of evaluation we might try to put into place so that we can see which of the systems maybe merits the advantage in the future?

I think this is one of the options the committee may be looking at, some kind of ability for both approaches to be used at the secondary system. I wonder if you could give us any practical advice on that.

1030

Mr. Grant: I do not pretend to speak on behalf of the OAEAO when it comes to work duty. However, I do feel it would be possible for our organization to come up with such a model.

I would also add to your second question, in terms of being specific about the model for

student evaluation, that I would not pretend at this time to come up with any suggestion whatsoever until such time as I saw the working model you had asked for in the first question.

I think student evaluation is absolutely key in this area in terms of student learning outcomes and balancing those outcomes. I would not for a moment feel comfortable doing that at this time. Perhaps my colleagues would—I do not know—but I would not.

Mr. Willms: If nonstreaming is to be effective in grade 9 and in grade 10, then it is based on one of two assumptions, one of two things which would have to occur. One is that everyone has to cross the same hurdle before they get to that common grade 9 or grade 10, which would mean that the hurdle would be very low to let most people across at age 14, or it would be so high that many pupils at ages 16 and 17 would not get across that hurdle. Certainly, I would not want to support something that would keep 16- and 17-year-olds in the elementary school.

The other thing that could occur with nonstreaming in grades 9 and 10 is that within individual classrooms we work with our teachers, and I am confident that our teachers can, do and will provide for group differences within that common grade 9. They are different as they reach ages 13 and 14 and 15, and we can either keep them the same by having everyone cross the hurdle or by recognizing their differences.

Either model can work and I do not want to suggest that OAEAO would or could, because it would be very easy for me in my last three months to say: "Sure. OAEAO will provide you with the blueprint."

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just think there are models out there at the moment. For instance, the Waterloo County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and other boards have been trying the heterogeneous approach you are talking about, the latter. It would be really interesting to get administrators' points of view from both systems, some ideas of models that we as legislators could then evaluate in the future. That is the only point I would like to make, that it would be helpful to us.

One tiny thing is that you make a point about OSIS supposedly going to help parental involvement at the secondary level. We have heard nobody expostulating the notion that that has actually occurred, that there has been greater parental involvement at the secondary level since OSIS. I wonder if from your perspective we might have some comment about whether that

particular goal seems to be working in the system.

Mr. Wells: I can guarantee it is working. Whether it is working well enough—but I give you particularly the dress codes that were developed by parent and staff involvement across Ontario, the study of technical education which involved nonteaching members as well as teachers. Certainly, schools have been opened up to outside influences more in the last five years than was my previous experience in 32 years.

Mr. Reycraft: I have a couple of questions I want to ask. They, too, deal with streaming. One of the valid criticisms we have heard about the streaming system, I believe, is the fact that once kids have selected either basic-level or general-level courses, it becomes very difficult for them to move back into the advanced-level program, or if they have selected basic courses, back to the general level.

OSIS suggested three different ways of assisting students to do that. One of the ways was the use of transitional courses. Does your association have any sense of the extent to which those transitional courses are being used in the schools of this province to help students do that?

Mr. Grant: I do not know that I can speak on behalf of whether our organization has that level of awareness. I just do not feel I could do that. A personal comment is that I would perceive that there are not enough transitional courses being offered. When I look, for example, at various boards' summer school calendars, I do not find a great number of transitional courses being offered in those calendars.

Mr. Reycraft: Might I ask if transitional courses to some extent, though, are being offered in the four systems you gentlemen represent.

Mr. Grant: They are in mine. I do not know about the others.

Mr. Wells: Yes. My opinion is exactly the same as Mr. Grant's, that they are not offered in sufficient numbers to meet all needs.

Mr. Reycraft: My other question deals with the suggestion we have had from a number of different groups that we destream grades 9 and 10 and not implement streaming until third year in secondary school. We have also heard that since OSIS was implemented, the percentage of students taking advanced-level courses in grade 9 has gone up considerably and that it appears to be declining as the students move to second, third, fourth and perhaps fifth year in secondary school. That would suggest to me that a number of those students in grade 9 are making an

inappropriate selection. If that is a valid assumption, is there not a danger in accepting that recommendation that we destream in grades 9 and 10, that we just defer the appropriate course selection even later than it already is?

Mr. Grant: I would not agree with that conclusion in terms of deferring the appropriate decision. If I could take you back just a few years ago prior to OSIS, we had in our system something called open courses with no particular designation. That seemed to work in most cases quite well. It would seem to me that if open courses were reinstituted, particularly in grades 9 and 10, there is no reason they would not work well again. As an educator and a parent myself, if I can defer that decision to grade 11, I feel much more comfortable with that than making it at the end of grade 8.

Mr. Johnston had asked the question earlier, "Are more parents involved with OSIS?" My experience as a secondary school principal would say yes, because they feel that after grade 8 it is very critical they start making some decisions. I have also found that many students who find themselves in grade 10 now also have to make a decision: "Do I do this in four years or am I going to take four and a half years or five years to get my diploma that includes my six Ontario academic course credits?" I think parents are much more involved because they are seeking answers, and the reason they are seeking answers is because they feel pressure to make a decision.

Mr. Reycraft: We have heard from a number of groups, as recently as last Thursday with the Ontario Teachers' Federation, that most students and parents make those course selections at grade 9 on the principle of trying to keep as many options open as possible. That suggests that if they are going to err in making a course selection, they always err on the upward side. You have told me you do not think that will happen if it is moved back from grade 9 to grade 11.

Mr. Grant: That is correct.

Mr. Reycraft: I appreciate the answer.

Mr. Jackson: I would like to build on the comment you made that when examining summer school calendars you find very few transition programs. That is the first time we have heard that. I want to talk about semestering and why there are so few clear academic reasons to support its wide use in this province. You have given more detail than most have in your treatment of semestering and I appreciate that, but you do not provide any conclusions; they are very general in nature.

For those who look at Radwanski's work and where he stood on semestering, he offered very little, but he did indicate that summer school was an essential component of a student's last opportunity to ensure that he has achieved a certain level before he is grade-promoted.

I guess my general question is why do you not even go so far as to recommend that there be further study of semestering and its academic merits as opposed to its being simply more convenient and more flexible? We had one board tell us that it was easier to perform on the computer. We are not hearing a lot of strong academic arguments as to the value of semestering. We have heard arguments that there are certain deficiencies in math and English for an interrupted secondary program. I wonder if you could provide us with a little more insight as to where you as administrators would like to see semestering in our schools go.

1040

Mr. Lozon: I will begin and certainly ask for some help from my colleagues here. I think one of the things we pointed out is that semestering provides for a fairly wide range of organizational opportunities, more so than the other options that we have seen in the past. We also leave the option out for experimental opportunities and for leadership in that area, but in looking at the credit system and the various options that can be provided through a semester system, such as half-course semester credits, full-course and also full-year, we really feel there is a lot of opportunity within that structure to provide schools with all sorts of opportunity to administer and use alternative structures. Again that is a very general answer, but I see it in particular as being the one that provides the greatest opportunities for other choices for school organizational structure.

Mr. Williams: The success of a semestered school or not-semestered school may well depend on other factors than the inherent value of the organization. Somehow the organization with which we are most comfortable, the organization to which individuals are most committed, is the successful one. Three years ago we closed a semestered school in this city and we attached most of the attendance zone to a school that was not semestered and made provisions for those students who wished to continue in a semestered school to opt for another school of the same kind.

The cohesiveness of the student body was such that most of them did go to the school that was not semestered. It was a problem for those who had

experienced the semestering. For a year, they kept saying, "Boy, we wish our school was semestered." For those students from that attendance area who had never been in a secondary school, semestered or otherwise, the fact that it is not semestered where they are is not a problem and, likewise, the same kind of thing happens with teachers. Academically, as to the inherent value of either system, I believe the jury is still out and the jury will continue to be out. Therefore, we may have to do some of each.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Grant had a comment.

Mr. Grant: I would like to concur with Mr. Lozon in saying that we need to examine greater flexibility within the semestering situation; but I would caution you and my caution is this: The principal of a secondary school of 350 students does not have the flexibility of a principal of 1,400 students and it becomes very, very difficult to deliver a number of modes of delivery in a different format in that situation.

Mr. Jackson: I cannot help but comment that this is now the third select committee of the Legislature that I have served on where it always surfaces, what is the optimum size for a school in terms of organization. Perhaps on the fourth or fifth presentation of one of these legislative committees we will get something more clear and definitive from the principals, headmasters and administrative officials on numbers. I could not resist putting that in. Thank you for referring to the challenge of organizing schools based on population.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the OAEAO—see, I got it all out in one breath—for its presentation to our committee today. I personally found it to be excellent and it gave us a new perspective on some of the issues such as streaming, where before we have had advantages and disadvantages, but we have never really had a group that has said what would happen if we did not have streaming. We very much appreciate your contribution to our committee today.

Our next delegation will be from the Essex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Would you come forward, please?

Good morning and welcome to our committee. I suspect you were here with our previous delegation, so you probably heard the instructions. I will repeat that we do have half an hour for your presentation and we try to keep to our time limit, although we are not always successful in that. If you could try to allocate the first half for your oral presentation and leave approximately half for questions, that would be very helpful.

You may begin whenever you wish. Please start by identifying yourself for the purposes of Hansard.

ESSEX COUNTY ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. Petrozzi: Thank you. The name is Don Petrozzi. I am chairperson of the Essex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. On my left is our director, Ronald Reddam.

I bring greetings from our trustees, our administration, our staff and, most particularly, our students and our parents. We are happy to see you people in the city and we thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation. As was stated by the people from Windsor and others, we are most happy that you have taken the time and the effort to go through what you are going through. I will turn it over to our director for the paper.

Mr. Reddam: Thank you very much. First, let me apologize for not having this paper in your hands at the time you had requested it. There were other matters that were pressing and we just finished the report in the last few weeks. Something I do not like to do is to read a paper once you have it in your hands. Nevertheless, just to give you an opportunity to make sure that we do go through the whole report, I will read it. It should take about 10 minutes.

I have also left with you a videotape that was made by our system. I hope at some time this committee will have an opportunity to view the tape. The tape in itself is not directly connected to this presentation. However, we feel it does give you a visual of the very serious concerns we have and the opportunities that we want the students to know about in making a choice of their high schools.

We are grateful for the opportunity to present our paper to the select committee on education. We hope the hearings prove useful and that your report will assist the educational community and, in particular, the students of Ontario.

Although the topics selected are more related to the organization of secondary schools today, it is important to understand that some of these topics would not have been an issue a mere 10 years ago, nor have we had sufficient experience to relate specific data to prove or disprove some of our contentions.

Nevertheless, the shift in secondary schools is significant because of societal changes and demographic shifts, OSIS requirements, the results of mainstreaming, student expectations and needs, research and our own growth.

Education has broadened to include a greater emphasis on student growth and development. Many new initiatives stress moral and social growth, health and physical welfare as well as the acquiring of basic skills.

It is our belief that every student has a right to equal educational opportunity in a framework that encourages his or her growth as an individual and that educational progress must be measured in terms of human growth as one meaningful measure of accomplishment.

We strongly believe education is a service industry and that every student must receive instruction appropriate to his or her learning rate and style. Schools are in existence to serve the needs of students, not the reverse.

Our elementary schools are mainstreamed and our secondary schools in the process of becoming fully mainstreamed and, as such, fully composite.

We believe that parents are the first and most important educators of their children and should be involved in as many decisions about their education as possible.

Grade promotion: It is at the elementary level that grade promotion occurs and reflects more the deficiency of the graded structure than the exact measurement of incremental learning. Grade promotion came about when educators realized that repeating a whole year did not produce the results commensurate with the negative factors associated with the retention. This does not mean that all students are promoted automatically but that a more careful analysis is undertaken as to the actual benefits that accrue to the student. It was not the student that failed, but rather the educational program and the system that did not respond to that student's needs.

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A graded structure should not be used as an instrument to measure success or failure. The fallacy that every student can be made ready for grade 2 at the same date or chronological age leads one to believe that the student has not measured up to the standards of the system. It also leads to the belief that only the students who can pass the tests should move to the next grade.

At the secondary level, the credit system allows a student to advance and only repeat the specific subject that he or she has failed and/or to substitute other credits if possible.

Streaming: A great deal of research has been undertaken that asserts that homogeneous groupings, except for specific tasks, should not be used in the organization of students. It has been used in schools to assist in presenting a uni-

form method of instruction, usually the lecture method. Its long-term effects seem to benefit the instructor more than the student.

Grouping students in ability levels as an organizational structure does not adequately consider other factors such as aptitude, interest, motivation, desire or need. This lack of consideration more than any other factor has led to dropouts and underachievement. This also leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby lower-stream students are unable to leave their stream as conditions change. If you believe in mainstreaming, then any form of long-term streaming defeats its purpose.

At the secondary level, streaming should take place only at the senior division—that would be grades 11 and 12, OAC—and should not be exclusive or restricting. All schools should be composite and every student should be given a reasonable opportunity to succeed regardless of his or her ability. Education is lifelong and schools should provide opportunity for individual growth in a community atmosphere.

Semestering: One outcome of the implementation of the credit system of OSIS appears to have been the introduction by more and more secondary schools of semestering.

It is our opinion that the school year should be restructured to encourage a switch to semestering by providing two semesters evenly divided by the Christmas holidays. Our board would support a careful study of a proposal prepared by the Regional Education Council of Eastern Ontario, which proposes a redefinition of the school year. I have attached their brief to this paper.

Research needs to focus on the variations of semestering and the different course formats and organizational structuring that would match students' learning styles with the most appropriate educational methodologies.

Literacy and numeracy must be emphasized in all subjects and every student should have a distinct component of each in every semester.

OSIS: It hardly seems appropriate to dismantle the organizational plan of OSIS until sufficient research can determine its effectiveness. Students have just completed the first full secondary term, and for the most part it seems to be better than previous schemes. What needs to be done is to modify and improve the plan to maximize what research and experience have indicated would benefit the students.

Since our Catholic secondary schools now encompass grades 9 through OAC, it is appropriate to provide for a credit for religion courses in

grades 11 and 12. We hope this committee would support that request.

There has not been sufficient in-service for secondary staff to incorporate successfully all aspects of OSIS and to plan for the necessary changes to the curriculum.

Students in the intermediate division should not be streamed and basic-level courses should be done away with at the senior level.

More emphasis needs to be placed on those students who are not going to post-secondary education. These students should be given more co-operative education and work experience programs that could help meet these students' needs. The modified school year suggested earlier in this paper would enhance this type of program.

With mainstreaming, more resources are needed to help the individual student with work-study skills that assist them to become more productive students and citizens.

Career planning should receive greater emphasis and all students who leave school early should be monitored and encouraged to upgrade their skills.

Employers need to assist in major initiatives to provide all employees with literacy programs and the opportunity and encouragement to complete their secondary education.

Conclusion: Students and teachers need to be reassured that any further changes in education in Ontario will be well thought out and tested before implementation. Furthermore, it should not be too much to expect that some stability be provided after such major changes have been implemented.

We are very proud of the many excellent programs and the success of the students in our schools and we encourage you to recommend that sufficient resources be provided to meet the needs of our students.

It is our hope that you will have the opportunity to visit schools throughout the province as well as to listen to the presenters. There is an expertise and a willingness to improve, and we have made significant changes to enrich the educational opportunities for our students. Students today are very serious and are working hard to become ready for any challenge they may face. It is time that all our energies be focused on the pursuit of educational excellence.

We wish to thank you for this opportunity to express our views and we wish you every success in the preparation and presentation of your report.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. I must congratulate you on a very concise and succinct report. I am pleased to say we have time for questions.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for a very concise but clear report.

On streaming, just so I can get some information about what your board does now, can you tell us what is happening with your high schools? You are talking here about trying to have them fully mainstreamed; then you mention that senior students might be streamed. Can you tell us how you are dealing with that on a practical, day-to-day basis?

Mr. Reddam: We really are not, to be honest with you. I think most schools in Ontario operate in a very similar manner in that we follow the guidelines from the ministry. We have streaming going on and we are offering three levels of courses in some subjects throughout the five years of high school.

What we are really talking about here is the opportunity to change that somewhat. I would not recommend that these changes take place overnight. I see a more gradual change. I would allow the schools that are willing to change to change first and then I would research it enough to show that it is better than the present method.

What we are saying is that we feel every one of our students should go to a community high school. We mainstream the students no matter what their educational accomplishments are at that age and we bring them into the high school in a process whereby we encourage, as much as possible, their integration with as many of the other student activities as possible. We spend a great deal of time discussing what goes on between the two bells and not enough time on what goes on in socializing for these students outside that period.

In fact, we are not really doing a lot different from many other systems. The basic difference is bringing in those students who are mainstreamed, and even they are segregated for some part of the day.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other question I have, following from that, is the presumption that a heterogeneous setting is better for most students but the recognition that, because of OAC and other matters, the senior levels maybe can do without it and move on to more homogeneous kinds of groupings.

I have not been able to find in the literature anything that says at what age that principle applies. Most of the literature seems to say that there are benefits from streaming—and that seems

to be a minority opinion. Most of that literature seems to be older than the material which says that the heterogeneous grouping is as effective. We are making presumptions. Is it just on university readiness and meeting criteria for university that we are basing this or is there some literature that actually says that senior students should be in more homogeneous groupings?

Mr. Reddam: I think all the research that I have ever looked at indicates that homogeneous grouping as a fixed, standard method of organization is not in the best interest of the student.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: At any age.

Mr. Reddam: At any age. I do not know where there is any research that points out anything different from that. In fact, one of my theses at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education was just on that basis. I am not saying that students should not be grouped for specific purposes, and we have said that in this report. What I do not agree with is the fact that they are streamed out of grade 8 for the rest of their lives. When you think about it, the process, the decision, goes beyond high school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I make the same distinction in terms of what I mean by streaming.

The other point I would like to draw your attention to, which I thought was very interesting, is that in the semestering component, you did put down a notion that there should be a literacy and numeracy component to every semester to provide the continuity that some people are concerned about. Do you see that as being something that is handled through the language-of-instruction kind of approach, or how do you see that being dealt with?

Mr. Reddam: It can be, if language is used across the curriculum. If every single teacher makes it a point to assist the student, no matter what the subject is, in the usage of the language, then it can be accomplished that way. If not, then I suspect I would say they should have a component of literacy and numeracy, even if I said that the students would take a four-year course in the midst of their semestering. When you semester, that does not mean to say that every subject needs to be divided by half a year. I think that is what you are hearing from some educators on the flexibility. It is there; we are not using it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What about the school year calendar proposal from the eastern Ontario types? It is an interesting proposal. What has your board done with that at this point?

Mr. Reddam: Nothing. No other board in Ontario has. We are not allowed to.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just meant in terms of discussion and that kind of thing.

Mr. Reddam: Oh. I think it needs investigation. I am not convinced that it is necessarily the best. I really believe there is a great deal of society out there that this would impact on. I think we need to give concern to that aspect other than to the educational needs. As such, I think it needs to be studied. I think it is worthy of study and I would hope that the province would take a serious look at it to see if, in fact, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, and there are disadvantages.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thanks very much.

Mrs. O'Neill: Your brief has certainly presented many questions to my mind that I would like to explore with you. I am glad Mr. Johnston took on the one he did. I was really delighted, being a member from Ottawa, to see the eastern Ontario brief, which I got my first look at about a year ago now in Windsor, and that you think there are some very good things being talked about up there.

I would like to ask a couple of things. I would like to pick up on one of the statements you made to Mr. Johnston. You say the flexibility that is in OSIS is not being used. If you could try to focus a bit on that, we are trying to look to the business of transition programs. The previous group mentioned that it feels even that is not being explored. Could you say a little bit more about the flexibility in OSIS that you do not think is being used?

Mr. Reddam: Again, I think there is provision for full-credit courses, half-credit, quarter-credit, and even some experimentation along other avenues. I think that needs to be further explored. I do not believe the schools have utilized it because of one component that I think should be done away with, and that is the requirement that there be 120 hours of instruction for every subject. I do not mind there being 120 hours for certain areas of the course curriculum, but I do not see the need to have 120 hours for every single course.

To me, there is a great deal more to learning than simply what comes out of a textbook. I would like to encourage the use of students going out into the workforce throughout their high school career, as an option for some students. I think the flexibility is there, but the schools are simply complying with too many other require-

ments such as the 120 hours and find it difficult to package it.

It is also that secondary schools are just getting used to OSIS and we cannot talk about it as if it has been here for 20 years. As they experiment more with it and as some models are being used across Ontario, those advantages will spread to other schools. Eventually, I think there will be a greater use of those flexibilities. Right now, there are some difficulties in trying to get people to change from the method in which they have been teaching for a great number of years.

Mrs. O'Neill: You said on page 9 that you expect employers need to assist in major initiatives. Have you done some of that to your own advantage in your own community?

Mr. Reddam: Certainly, in co-operative programs, in co-operative education, yes. I think most school boards in Ontario have taken great strides to contact the industries and to put our students out there so they do get a taste of what the work world is all about and what the requirements are out there.

Mrs. O'Neill: In your case, have you done that with technical education, or is your board into technical education at all?

Mr. Reddam: We are really just getting into the full scope of technical education. It is interesting that there is a quite a bit of debate in Ontario regarding the best method of provision for technical studies. I happen to think that we do not need to duplicate the technical aspects of education so much as we need to use what is out in society that develops those technologies. We should be putting our students out in society where there is the money to do the kinds of things we cannot do.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. I have other questions, but I will bow in the cause of time.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mrs. O'Neill. I would very much like to thank the Essex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board—that is quite a mouthful all in itself—for its contribution to our committee today. Just before you go, I would mention to the members that there is a proposal at the back of the brief which you might like to take time to read after. Although it is not necessarily on the organization of the educational system, it is a topic which may well be on the future agenda of our committee.

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Mrs. O'Neill: A very stimulating thought from eastern Ontario.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There is probably one every now and then; once a decade, whether we need it or not.

Madam Chairman: It is just nice to see that co-operation, where we see a proposal from eastern Ontario at the back of a brief from an organization in western Ontario. Thank you very much for your contribution to our committee today.

Mr. Petrozzi: I hope you all have the opportunity to take the time to look at our promo video too. I am sure you will find it most interesting.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We are going to have a video day when we get back to Toronto.

Mr. Jackson: Can we duplicate this one?

Mr. Petrozzi: Yes, you can.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: The next delegation is the Waterloo County Board of Education. Perhaps you could come forward, please, to the microphones. Good morning. Welcome to our committee. I would just mention at the beginning that we have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation, including time for members' questions. We hope there will be lots of time at the end of your oral presentation for that purpose.

You may begin whenever you wish. Perhaps you would like to start by identifying yourselves individually for the purpose of electronic Hansard so we can keep track of who is saying what, then begin whenever you are ready.

WATERLOO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. Witmer: I am Elizabeth Witmer, the chairperson of the board. I would like to introduce the people who are here with me. On my right is Trustee Susan Sanderson. Beside Mrs. Sanderson is the director of education for our board, Gordon Jones, and on my left is the superintendent of curriculum and program development, David McLelland. I will be the only one who will be speaking. Once I am finished speaking in the given time, all of us are prepared to respond to your questions.

First, let me say that our board certainly does welcome the opportunity to share some of our perceptions with regard to elementary and secondary school education in the province. We believe that good education occurs when the students, the parents, the educators, the trustees and the community are working together as a dedicated team, searching for the best structures and methods to engage the particular students in their schools. We try, as much as possible, to focus and transform our schools into learning

communities rather than having a centralized system.

We are certainly very pleased that the select committee is inviting public input because we do feel that you are giving a very clear and a very positive message to the citizens of this province. You are saying education is important and also that community input is extremely important. We hope to see this process continue and we hope that community-centred involvement and decentralized decision-making will continue.

I would now like to focus on some of the key issues. You have invited comment on the organization of the education process relating to streaming, grade promotion, semestering and OSIS. You will notice in our brief that we have also chosen to include three other issues which we feel are extremely important. We realize we have exceeded our mandate, but we will be highlighting goals, finance and governance.

Turning to streaming, we feel that individuals come to the learning environment with very different abilities, different interests and readiness levels. Instruction usually takes place in groups of 20 or more students now, and we feel this is extremely important to note. There are individual differences and in order to accommodate those differences, somehow we group students. There are several strategies used. Sometimes we do grouping within a class; sometimes we offer a variety of different programs from which students may choose their courses of personal interest; sometimes we offer programs of differing levels of difficulty or what is referred to as streaming.

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Streaming, then, is simply an instructional strategy. We feel it must be implemented with great sensitivity and must at all times focus on the learner. Every effort must be made to minimize elitism, as well as a loss of self-esteem. I would conclude by saying we do believe that streaming as a concept, as an instructional strategy, is educationally sound. However, its application which must be very closely monitored.

Moving to grade promotion, we all know that grade promotion has a very long history in this province and is something parents are familiar with; they recognize it as a benchmark. The public is also very aware that there are differences in the acquired knowledge, skills and success levels of promoted students. What we feel is necessary is that there be some blending of the subject or the credit promotion with the grade promotion. The social, emotional and physical needs of each individual must also be considered

in the promotional question. I stress that if the present grade promotion system, with its flaws, is to be altered, I would remind you it is going to take a great deal of time and effort to change parental and societal attitudes.

Semestering and OSIS: Again, semestering is a school organizational strategy. That has been stressed. It is not a derivative of OSIS, as some people feel. Certainly, prior to OSIS, approximately half of our secondary schools were semestered. However, OSIS certainly can be credited with escalating the semestering trend.

We realize that semestering, like any organizational system, has its strength and its weaknesses. In schools, we try to focus on the learner and the organization. We have to respond to the needs of the learner by acknowledging individual differences and we have to provide an inviting environment which makes learning meaningful. We want learners to be involved at all times as active participants.

Semestering is only one strategy for organizing a school to focus on the learner. In our county, we prefer very much to have a mixture of semestered and traditionally organized secondary schools because we feel there are some students who flourish under the semestered system while others very much prefer the traditional organization. At the present, we have six schools which are semestered, 10 which are not semestered and two which are considering semestering, so we will almost be half and half. We feel that option for young people is extremely important.

Since OSIS is certainly a recent provincial policy, we feel there needs to be a process for review put in place to monitor this policy as well as to identify and make necessary modifications, as societal values, priorities and needs are constantly changing.

We have two concerns with OSIS. The first is the qualification for graduation with the Ontario academic credit in French. At present, students must complete a minimum of 4,400 to 5,000 hours. This is the only course that has a minimum number of hours as a prerequisite requirement for the attainment of the OAC. As a result of this, you are forcing an organizational model on boards of education as they struggle in their determination to reach the number of hours required. I guess our question is, why is French being treated differently from the other disciplines? We would recommend that this unique and specific requirement for French be reviewed.

Our second concern is with the 30 credits necessary to receive the Ontario secondary

school diploma. The majority of students who are enrolled in the basic-level and general-level programs are there with the intention of remaining in high school for four years. Most of these students take seven credits each year—that is a very realistic workload for these young people and it also provides some scheduling flexibility—so at the end of the four years, they have attained 28 credits and not the 30 required to graduate.

Consideration should be given to the 30-credit requirement at all levels because we feel that perhaps this is a factor in the number of students who are dropping out, that they are unable to attain the 30 credits in the four years. We would ask you to take a look at that.

Goals: we simply support the Association of Large School Boards in Ontario in its proposed mission statement. However, we would add one other. We feel that the individual should learn how to live in harmony with others. We would suggest also that with a mission statement, whatever it might be, we should be asking the community for some input. I think that is extremely important.

Turning to finance, there are five points. There are many provincial initiatives undertaken and in each case the financial burden seems to be falling upon the community taxpayer. For example, with the lowering of the class size in grades 1 and 2, although we certainly support that, it was the local taxpayer who seemed to have the bulk of the dollars, and we would ask you to take a look at that.

We also request that you take a look at the funding of education, that you restore it to the 60 per cent. Also, we would again identify that there is a need in this province for new schools. But even more there is a need to renovate existing ageing facilities and we ask that you give capital requirement high priority status. Also, we ask you to take a look at the grant ceilings. All boards are exceeding that ceiling. Obviously, it is unrealistic and needs to be adjusted.

Finally, if we take a look at the grants available for the elementary and the secondary school students, we see a gap. We would ask that you take into consideration some of the new happenings in the elementary schools, such as planning time, the 200 minutes the teachers are asking for, and the other growth factors that have occurred: they now have vice-principals; they now have librarians; they now have guidance personnel, and we would ask that the gap between elementary and secondary be removed.

Governance: here we have three observations. First, in Waterloo county, we believe very

strongly in decentralized decision-making, or where practical, we believe that action resolution should be taken at the point closest to the decision point.

Second, the chief executive officer is asked to submit an annual report to the board and to the minister. We are requesting that the Minister of Education be expected to file the same kind of annual report card with the constituents in this province and that it be highlighted in the newspapers, through the media, in whatever way possible, and that we invite the public to respond to that report card on an annual basis.

Third, the mandate of public education is to serve the educational needs of the learner. In order to do this effectively, we need a strong tax base. We would urge you not to take any action with regard to how public education is funded without consultation and discussion with all those involved in education.

As mentioned here, there are other issues we feel are important. However, we hope we will be able to comment at a future time. We believe we share a common goal with you. We are seeking to improve both the quality of education and also the strength of our primary resource in this province, our people.

At this time, we would be pleased to respond to any questions you might have.

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Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation this morning, and particularly for the fact that you did allow time for questions, because it is always very frustrating for us when presenters take up all their time with their oral presentation and we have to cut short the questions. We will start first with Mr. Johnston, followed by Mr. Keyes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the brief. It is very useful and nicely laid out. Although we are supposedly not dealing with some of the issues at this time, they definitely do have an impact, whether you are talking about the process and accountability or whether you are talking about how much of the resources should start going in at the primary level if we want to address some of the problems that we have. So I think it is very helpful in many of its contexts.

I wonder if I could just ask you about something that has come up a lot around grade promotion, and that is that the public is not ready for the notion of getting rid of it for some other kind of form. I am wondering if I can just get a response from you about that because you asserted it as well. We have dropped grade promotion in high school and we now have a

credit system, which people seem to be adjusting to, or maybe I am wrong about that.

Why do you think that parents would not be able to deal with more of a question of the mastering of courses at the primary level, and maybe with divisional promotion as has been suggested by some groups, rather than the strict grade promotion, especially in the primary division? It just seems to be so unfair in terms of the huge differences between kids who enter the school system at different ages, etc.

Mrs. Witmer: Speaking I guess as a trustee, and I certainly will ask one of our staff to respond as well, but I feel that any changes that have been made in education over the last few years are always met with some reluctance and reservation by the public. It seems that we have extreme difficulty in communicating to the public the changes that are taking place. As a result, they become very fearful and they are not quite sure what is happening. That is certainly a problem we would have if we changed grade promotion, which is something that they are all familiar with. How would we communicate the difference to them? That is a real problem.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: My difficulty is that it is at the elementary panel where you really have the parents involved, generally speaking. More and more of them, I think, are more understanding of some of the ranges of development and the individualized kind of approach to education, which really seems to be taking place there.

I just wonder if we are presuming incorrectly that they could not handle a slightly more rational approach to promotion of children at that age, especially when a more liberal—if I can use that expression—approach to promotion seems to be taking place anyway in reality. Why do we still have to mask, as we often do in some boards it seems to me, the notion of grade promotion when that is really not what we are up to anyway?

Mr. Jones: If I may, Madam Chairman, there is no doubt that we are products of our own history, and I think that is where most of the parents are. They want a convenient handle to discuss with their neighbours, their friends, their relatives and their kids the kind of progress the youngsters are making through school.

I think that your point about the secondary school and the transition through the credits is valid, although if you start talking with parents, I am sure you have heard their expression "grade 12, grade 11," regardless of the credits.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Grade 13, even.

Mr. Jones: Yes indeed. They are trying to communicate in a sort of verbal shorthand.

I think the point that we are trying to make is in the middle of our comment on grade promotion on page 4. We think that perhaps some kind of blending of the two notions is a good idea over time, and I think we are starting to see that now in the secondary panel. We can have the concept of grade promotion put in its proper perspective.

In the elementary school, certainly with the heightened involvement with the parents, particularly with parent volunteers coming into the classrooms, the whole notion of grade promotion will start to fade, but it is going to take time because it is just a matter of changing a lot of habits of a lot of people.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I found your two comments on OSIS fascinating, and I wondered what the rationale was for the hours on French. Can you tell me what that was based on? I was not involved.

Mr. McLelland: If I may respond to that, my understanding is that it is related to the funding, to special grants relative to French instruction, which were based on hours of instruction. We were required to maintain a log for each student as to how many hours of French instruction he or she had had. Based on that, then boards of education were funded accordingly.

We do have some difficulty with it, as was mentioned in Mrs. Witmer's earlier comments, because it does treat French differently from other disciplines, and if you really extrapolate from that, it begins to dictate elementary school organization. It has that compounding effect that it is fine to say that to take an Ontario academic course you need so many hours of instruction, but then you must go back and ask, to achieve that number of hours of instruction, where must you begin the program?

I know that in some of our discussions with the ministry we have asked that question, "Are you now beginning to tell elementary schools how to be organized?" Our understanding is that the minister would say no, but in actual practice it would appear that is indeed happening.

Mrs. O'Neill: If I may just say as a point of information, I think that is tied up to the pilot project we did in the 1970s. School boards chose whether they would go with core French, extended French or immersion, and it is all really tied to the hours, the preparation that begins, in some cases, in five-year-old kindergarten.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It does sound, though, as if maybe in the 1980s it is time to have a look at that again.

About your 30 credits and reduction, which I have some sympathy with, we have also had

briefs given to us which have indicated that in fact people want more mandatory credits being used up, whether it is the Catholic system wanting a couple of extra credits or key people concerned about the number of French credits that are taken up in some of the schools. What does that do in terms of options if we drop it to 28? Can you talk to me a little bit about the reality of that?

Mr. McLelland: Again, if we go back a piece, my understanding is that as OSIS was being developed, out of the 30 credits there were as high as 23 mandatory credits at one point in the planning. I think it is right on the point you are making, Mr. Johnston, that various lobby groups were pushing whatever their particular drum was; they were beating it loudly and bringing some pressure to bear. The sense was that when the final countdown came and it was 16 out of 30, that was probably felt to be as far as one could really go.

I think the point you make is a very vital one, that while we are concerned about the number 30 and the impact it has on years to graduate, if you reduce that number without giving some thought to mandatory credits as well, you could be creating some other difficulties in that particular approach. So it would need further study.

Mr. Keyes: Just following up on that point, when you are suggesting dropping it—and you used a reference to four years, seven courses per year—you seem to automatically be saying 28. Are you really suggesting, though, that we go back to two types of diplomas, as we used to have? That is almost what you are saying without putting it in writing, particularly for the basic and the general courses. Or are you acknowledging that fact but not advocating it?

Mrs. Witmer: No, we are not promoting that at all. We still would support the three different levels of ability.

Mr. Keyes: I want to go back to the streaming area, because you have, in fairness, I think, maybe been a little more general in the way you have covered that in your brief than on grade promotion. You have not given any suggestion that there needs to be a change in streaming as to when it occurs. I am just wondering, because more and more I think we could almost say unanimously or that we are getting quite a consensus from the people as to when streaming should occur, streaming as we know it in the three levels.

You have not said it specifically. Do you have, as a board, any philosophy that, if there is a change—you have acknowledged that streaming

is appropriate but you have not said whether there needs to be the fine-tuning to change it. In other words, should the determination be done when it is now, in grade 8, or should it wait until later on? I do not think you had a chance to hear it, but the group just before you said very specifically only in the senior divisions.

Mr. McLelland: If I may comment: First of all, when we looked at streaming, we were looking at it beyond the three levels of difficulty. We were looking at it from kindergarten right through to graduation, but if we address it at the three levels of difficulty, which now under OSIS come into effect in grade 9, our general premise would be that we think that is working reasonably well. As you have heard in previous presentations, the newness of OSIS, which is still there, probably requires more time to really check that out.

Going back to the open-level courses that were mentioned in the first presentation this morning, we found they worked quite well in our jurisdiction where we had a blend—and it may sound as though I am coming from both points of view—but provincially there was some concern in that when you took that situation, very often those students who perhaps took the course at a general level became those who did less well, so you were predetermining the range of marks by those students. I think that was the basis of some support provincially for going to the three levels of difficulty. But generally speaking, in Waterloo county we feel the three levels are working reasonably well, and yet probably it is still early to make that as a firm statement at this point in time.

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Mr. Keyes: Another quick question related to that: Have you done anything in your board? Many people have suggested that there is difficulty in the, let's say basic level in the way you apply the teachers and the capacity and ability of teachers, and that people look at basic-level courses as not being as demanding or as effective. Part of it is because of the teachers who get relegated to the area. It is a touchy one, but it is one we must address. Have you looked at that at all, as the board, as you assign teachers to those levels?

Mr. McLelland: Yes, I think we have. Again I think we feel very good about our selection process for teachers in Waterloo county. We have been very blessed in getting excellent teachers to respond to the instructional needs of our learners.

We do not seem to have a sense that there is a difficulty in assigning teachers to the various levels of difficulty. In fact, we have staff in our schools who would prefer to teach at the general level of difficulty or indeed the basic level of difficulty. I am talking about very strong, outstanding teachers.

True, most of us have come through an advanced level. That has been our experience. Sometimes I think that does colour our point of view but, by and large, the assignment of staff has not really been a dilemma that we have had to face. We have been blessed with very outstanding staff.

Mr. Keyes: My final question is just the transference between levels. We get some groups who say the tendency is for people in advanced levels to want to drop back levels. But then that is totally disproved in other jurisdictions.

Have you any study on that at all on your own to know whether there are difficulties for the general-level student trying to get into the advanced programs? There are two sides to it.

Mr. McLelland: If I may again, first of all, confess a bias; even as I was listening to earlier presentations today, as I think about the spirit of OSIS I am a little bit troubled personally when I hear people talking about moving back or moving up or moving down.

We may be playing on words but it seems to me that if we really want to change attitudes, we should be talking about moving across from one level to another. It may sound like I am playing with words, and I apologize for that, but—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But is that not the problem with streaming, that labels are going to attach and values are going to attach?

Mr. McLelland: Yes, it probably is, but I think the way we approach it becomes important. We have in our board the opportunity to move from one level to another. I think there has been considerable growth in our secondary schools to provide those opportunities.

In reality, I do not have a sense that a whole lot of it is actually happening with the students. Yes, we do have some transition courses that were mentioned earlier. We addressed some of those within schools and we addressed some of them in the summer component of our continuing adult education programs.

The opportunity is there. There are some awkwardnesses, no question. Obviously, if you want to maintain standards in each of the three levels of difficulty, then you need different courses. Watered-down versions are not appropriate. If you therefore have differences in

courses and you are going to move, there is going to be some difficulty in moving to that. But the opportunity is there. I think we have a long way to go still in really making it a reality.

Mr. Keyes: So it is not totally a provincial fault at the moment, the degree of flexibility that needs to be built into the system?

Mr. McLelland: No, I do not believe so.

Madam Chairman: Just before you go, I think Mr. Mahoney had a supplementary on the previous question.

Mr. Mahoney: Actually, I was going to ask them to expand on the concept of bridges, but I think Mr. Keyes covered that. I would just comment that as long as we are going to have a system where one level allows you to go to university and another does not, it is always going to be moving up and down rather than moving across.

If there is some smoother way of allowing the transition and building the bridge at a certain point where a student makes a decision that he or she perhaps would like to go to university but is not in the proper course, I think we have to look at some way of facilitating that. I think it is a noble concept of moving across but I do not know that it is realistic.

Mr. McLelland: On the other hand, one cannot always assume that going to university is better than going to work.

Madam Chairman: For those currently in the workforce, I am not sure we agree with that statement.

Mr. Mahoney: I think it is better.

Mr. McLelland: Presumably, we all end up in that workforce somewhere. The route is what we are talking about.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Waterloo County Board of Education for coming before us today and sharing its ideas with our committee. We have noticed that you have gone beyond the mandate, as you mentioned, with finance and governance, and we will certainly keep your recommendation in mind should we be going on to those specific topics on the agenda later on. We are sure you will be back if we do.

Mrs. Witmer: We thank you for the opportunity to make the presentation and for giving us the opportunity to visit Windsor instead of Toronto.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am sure your brief will be referred to as "the little book."

Madam Chairman: That is right. It was kind of you to make it of such a nice size so that we can

slip it into our pockets or our purses. Mr. Johnston is putting his in his purse right now—sorry about that.

Mr. Reycraft: He will get you for that one.

Madam Chairman: I have a feeling he will.

Our next presentation is a group from the University of Windsor faculty of education. I believe it is Dr. Meyer, Mr. Kraus and Ms. Fraser. Welcome to our committee. You have presented us with quite a substantial brief, and we understand that you are willing to summarize it so that there will be time allotted at the end for questions. We appreciate that. Perhaps you could begin by identifying yourselves individually for the purpose of electronic Hansard. Then begin whenever you are ready.

JOHN R. MEYER
BONNIE FRASER
MICHAEL KRAUS

Dr. Meyer: My name is John Meyer. I represent myself, not the University of Windsor. To my right is Bonnie Fraser, who has just left a mathematics classroom this morning after teaching two classes in mathematics. She is a sterling example of a female in mathematics. To my left is Mike Kraus, who is vice-principal of Kingsville District High School.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Is it not a corporate model?

Dr. Meyer: We come to this particular presentation and we welcome the existence of this committee based on some of the introductory comments of the Radwanski report that a debate should be initiated. We repeat the conditional statement that is made in the brief that we are here representing ourselves as professional educators with some combined 50 years of educational experience as instructors.

This particular group arose out of a graduate class held in July on issues in education. We came across the fact, through the television, that this committee existed and was in proceedings in July.

Since we have basically only five minutes each, I will immediately commence by referring you to the three-part brief and my contribution in the first part. I list eight assumptions which I think are essential to all deliberations on education, and they need your specific attention. I then go on to list eight recommendations, beginning on page 4, that take their point of departure from the conviction that if any type of service area of government, in this case education, wishes to change, reform, restructure, it will have to address issues of the macrosystem, that is, the

system at large, as well as the delivery microsystems. In education, that means the provincial policies, delivery systems and local jurisdictions which critically affect the classroom workplace.

It seems pointless, as it were, simply to consider moving the furniture around a bit or, using the analogy, to take the cosmetic approach; rather, indeed, we have to respond more fundamentally, I think, to change. In a dynamic and fast-moving world, we need a responsive mechanism which is in fact creative, meaningful and flexible and which provides alternatives.

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Thus, I propose:

1. The system-wide bureaucratic changes.
2. The identification and use of vast quantities of collected data even over the past 25 years and the potential application of that data, recommendations, reports, commissions, etc.
3. The need for collaboration, co-operation and networking to impact the local and regional systems in a society that faces restrictions on financial allocations and resources.
4. More meaningful accountability at all levels of education.

Finally, recommendations 5 to 8, that support systems such as curriculum implementation design, teacher preparation, professional development, human resource and financial resource assistance in promoting social development be considered and undertaken.

Those are a summary, in fact, of the recommendations. I will immediately proceed then to Bonnie Fraser's section.

Ms. Fraser: The underlying assumption in my recommendation is that education is a lifelong learning experience. I am offering this in the same spirit as the Radwanski report was given; that is, without any consideration to the implications or ramifications.

Since our current high school system only serves 37 per cent of the clientele—those are the students who go to post-secondary education—that indicates to me that it needs to be revamped. I recommend that we grant a diploma at the end of grade 10, or the age of 16, or whenever a student has reached a minimum level of competency in a curriculum that I have stated on page 4. My curriculum is consistent with the 13 goals of education as stated in OSIS. I do have a few differences, though.

The first six, which should be tested on a province-wide basis, are mathematics, English, history, geography, French and science. The change to history and geography would be to include a component of world history and

geography, since we are educating students for life, and I think just Canadian is being too insular. I would also like a component in the science class to include a section on ethics and research.

The next topics do not lend themselves to province-wide exams, but I do believe computer, technical and business would lend themselves to board-wide exams.

As far as physical education is concerned, I would like the stress to be on sports for leisure and fitness. "Life skills" is not the same thing as OSIS describes it. It would be a course where the student would progress from self-evaluation to the world of work. I believe a program on career orientation should make the students aware of what is available and also force them to synthesize their own goals.

So that the students do not arrive at this age ready to take these province-wide exams unaware that they are deficient in certain areas, I would like a diagnostic exam in arithmetic and reading to be given to the students at the end of grade 6 with remediation immediately at that point. After the students have been granted this diploma they could drop back into the regular high school system to take a course that leads to university, and that is presently our curriculum. If they wish to follow an apprenticeship program, they could take the co-op component, or the work experience, or the packages that the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation has described. If they are then going to proceed to the world of work, we would be providing the workforce with students with some basic skills. They would also be younger and more mobile.

In conclusion, I would like this diploma to be granted with all the attendant ceremony we have now for our grade 12, so that people would recognize it as another legitimate stepping-stone in lifelong education and, hopefully, reduce the stigma of dropping out. It is not an optimal preparation for a dynamic participation in our democracy, but achieving it, we hope, would be an incentive to continue in the process of learning and self-development, maybe not right now but eventually.

This diploma would also produce a person with some generic skills whose self-esteem is intact and who still possesses the enthusiasm to learn and a willingness to recognize education as a lifelong learning experience.

Mr. Kraus: My name is Mike Kraus. I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity of presenting my views on the future of education in Ontario. I will be elaborating on several of the

eight recommendations that I have made in my part of the report.

First, I would advocate reducing the number of the elective credits from 14 to 10. In doing this, I would add two math credits at the senior level, with at least one of the maths being at a minimum-competency level in order to graduate. At a time when we are increasingly aware of the individuality of students, it does not seem to make sense to completely eliminate all choice. The reality of the situation is that right now at the grade 9 and 10 level, with the present mandatory courses there is very little choice.

The second recommendation would be that at the grade 9 and 10 levels we have a homogeneous level of courses, with streaming allowed only in the senior grades. At some point in time it is necessary to allow students to better qualify themselves for the area they are going to pursue after secondary school, whether that be work, college or university.

I feel strongly about creating a barrier-free transition from school to work by enhancing such programs as co-op and the supervised alternative for learning for excused pupils program. I applaud the initiatives of both the provincial and federal governments in areas such as co-op. Unfortunately, the success of programs such as co-op are beginning to cause concerns which will have to be addressed in the future.

I come from the Essex County Board of Education. Within a very small land area we have four distinct boards of education, all with co-op programs; we have the University of Windsor, St. Clair College and various government programs, such as Futures, all involved in trying to place students in business and industry. This is going to call for substantially more in the way of co-operation and co-ordination in the future. These programs, as I have said, have become very popular. I would hope that in the future we can do even more to respond to the needs of business and industry through these programs.

Guaranteeing post-secondary educational opportunity or jobs to low-motivation students: This sounds radical, and it is. It sound expensive, and it will be. However, the expense and the importance of this program, I believe, are clearly demonstrated.

Excellent research done in the United States indicates that for those with low motivation, and oftentimes these students are also from the lower socioeconomic group, it is a futile attempt to try to encourage them to stick with school when they know that the reality of the situation is that even if

they graduate, the chances of them going to college or university are very slim.

My suggestion would be to offer, whether it be college or university or work, some type of guarantee to these types of students from these backgrounds so they know that when they have finished with their high school diploma, there is going to be someplace for them to go.

Conversely, I think when we give an opportunity like that to our students, we have to put an extra onus of responsibility on them, so possibly a tying of these kinds of benefits to any social assistance programs we have might be in order.

Encouraging the concept of lifelong learning and welcoming dropping into school as an alternative to students who have previously dropped out: For too long, education in this province, and for that matter the country, has been something that we have considered for the young and work is the business of the adults in society. In today's information age, this is no longer true. We are going to have to spend continually greater amounts of money on increasing the opportunities for adult learning and taking away the stigma of dropping out from our schools.

Last, we have a problem in our schools that is more a result of the social ills of the province than anything else. As a secondary school administrator, I and my staff, and I am sure I can speak for my elementary colleagues, find ourselves constantly being asked to provide services that would normally have been provided for in the home in the past.

It is unreasonable to expect secondary schools, through curriculum or through courses, to change automatically what has gone on for years. Spending larger amounts of money on good basic education programs for the very young would be desirable.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation. I am glad to say you have left plenty of time for members' questions.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: It was a tough job to try to reduce all the information you put in your briefs. I know you left out a lot of things that are in here, which is unfortunate for Hansard, but the rest of us have had a change to read it. I think that is important.

I must say you struck a chord with me in the sense that you are talking in such large terms about education. I am becoming a little frustrated about what our focuses are in the sense that we are not sure that what we are dealing with here is not something that the government may be

dealing with anyway. Just the relevance of our dealing with certain issues is questionable; Whereas if we start to deal, as you have dealt, with the question of whether we should be looking at some of the old-fashioned groupings of subjects and what is an appropriate subject in this day and age and basically very radical kinds of concepts around reorganization, that may be something more useful for a select committee to do, be a little more futuristic about things. So I appreciate that.

Mr. Kraus, I must especially say that you are one of the first people who has concentrated on the impact of the failure of our education system for the lower-income student. That kind of guarantee is a radical notion, but I think it is well that if we are looking at rethinking our goals, one of the things we maybe should look at is what is the role of education in terms of not being another deadender, but some means of upward mobility. I appreciate that.

I have a couple of short questions. I know you are not trying to come to a consensus yourselves on your presentation, but in terms of the groupings of students, there is some suggestion here that grades 9 and 10 should be mainstreamed. Also, one of the positions is some rethinking of getting rid of the intermediate level. We have been hearing a lot lately from educators about the idea that perhaps the intermediate school—grades 7, 8, 9 and 10—is something that should be brought back in if we go to destreaming 9 and 10, and that concept is one that may have some validity. I am wondering whether you might from your three perspectives, because they are all quite different, make some comments on that kind of reorganizational suggestion.

Dr. Meyer: The structure of the intermediate, senior-secondary and primary-junior, brought about some years ago, I perceive as largely a type of post-secondary structure that has been imposed on elementary and secondary education for noble reasons. But I also think that logistically what never happened was that there was a nice family or transitional structure from intermediate to secondary. In other words, I think that most schools have remained physically separate and their programs have remained separate. I think there have been some success stories of really creating a family of elementary and secondary schools, but for the most part probably not. That would apply to staff, structure and curriculum.

I do not anticipate that in the future that is going to change radically, for a lot of reasons, principally financial and structural. I think that perhaps seeing a continuum from kindergarten to

grade 8 is more realistic. Hopefully, creating some kind of continuity in the program itself, in the curriculum itself from K to OAC would be much more desirable, because as I perceive it now we have individual units from year to year and there is very little continuity, though a number of units of the curriculum attempt to do that. But I do not think realistically it has been brought off very successfully. We do have a demise in the province of middle schools, again for principally enrolment reasons and financial reasons.

Mr. Kraus: I see it as a logistics problem more than anything else. Speaking on behalf of someone from a small rural board predominantly, I just see it being almost impossible to secure the kinds of facilities and the differentiation in facilities that we need to implement something of this nature.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Could I ask one short question of you, Ms. Fraser? I grew up with the province-wide exams in many of the subject areas you are advocating, and I remember how teaching was teaching to those province-wide exams. Probably the only thing that saved me in mathematics was that I had a very experienced mathematics teacher who knew what would be up in the exams and was able to drill it into my head time and time again. I wonder why you place such an emphasis on the notion of province-wide exams with all the difficulties there are in those kinds of standardized tests.

Ms. Fraser: That was a problem for me, but according to what I have suggested, I think that has to be so that all systems are offering exactly the same thing, so that we do achieve minimum standards. Grade 10 math is not at all like the OACs. What I suggested in here was the grade 10 general level, which I think is what most people in this world really need as far as math is concerned. Only if you are going to specialize do you need the higher level; so I do not see that as being a problem. I cannot speak for the other subjects, though.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I could speak for the general-level students for you.

Mr. Meyer: Perhaps I could just add a comment here. I do mention the need for accountability at all levels, and included in that would be some collection of data about where our students are at in this province. I think there are some boards of education which for a number of years, in fact, have collected data and tried to norm that and standardize it within their given boards, but I do not think we have a provincial

profile. There are some minimal efforts being made.

It is not provincial exams that I am interested in. It is knowing where any given student has added knowledge at any time in his or her educational career and being able to say, "Yes, we do have X percentage of students who are achieving some competency," whatever standards of competency the province or the boards collectively would wish to design. But I just do not think there is any baseline data there at all provincially that can determine where anybody is at.

Mr. Mahoney: Just on that item of the standardized test, many of the groups, if not all, that have come before us have really stressed the concept of individualizing education, the fact that different children learn at different rates and enjoy different levels of success.

Do you not really take a giant step backwards in education if you simply put a standardized test across the province and say, "Okay, those kids who pass this, this is what you can do"? What about the kids who do not pass? Are you not running a terrible risk, at the age of 16 coming out of grade 10, of streaming them into life rather than just streaming them educationally?

Ms. Fraser: I think the students would be able to take this test at many more times than when I took my grade 13s. They were only offered once a year. I would like it to be offered more often than that because I am at a semestered school now. The students would only take it when they were ready. There may be some students who are ready to take it earlier.

Last year, in Australia, I taught some grade 8 students who would be ready to take it. I have some grade 9 students now who would be ready to take the test I am suggesting. It is a minimum competency test I am looking for, not the kind of thing we all remember from grade 13.

Mr. Mahoney: Not a rigid thing that would say, "Okay, it is now June; it is time to write the exam"?

Ms. Fraser: Right.

Mrs. O'Neill: I guess my question is almost a supplementary, at least to begin with. You have given a little more information about what you mean by that kind of test, but I have to think about the student who may write it three times and may not pass.

Having just had some experience with people who are looking towards their chartered accountability exam, which is at the other end of the spectrum, it gets pretty discouraging when you

go back for the fourth exam. Is there a remedy for that? There will be some people who will not pass, especially if you choose the general-level programming criteria. Have you thought about the alternatives to a number of people who may then be totally rejected from a system at age 15 or 16?

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Ms. Fraser: I think those students would not make it through our system now. We are going to have to admit that we are not going to get every one. I did mention that only 37 per cent go on to post-secondary education, but we cannot guarantee that the other 63 per cent are going to accomplish the diploma either. I think it is unrealistic to expect that everyone is going to reach that. I think we have to accept that there will be failures. That is what I am trying to say.

Mrs. O'Neill: You seem to put a great deal of emphasis on grade 10, which I presume is somewhere near the 14-credit end of things. You have not, however, mentioned what is already in OSIS—the certificate of education. I do not know whether that ties in with your thinking.

Ms. Fraser: That has a different basis. The curriculum is not exactly the same as I have suggested.

Mrs. O'Neill: I realize that, but—

Ms. Fraser: It is similar, yes. I would just like more ceremony attached to this to remove the stigma of dropping out. This is perhaps off topic, but with a lot of students in our general level it seems as if we are just using school as a holding tank for them. They do not seem to be accomplishing too much before they get to grade 12 and they get discouraged and that is passed on to other people in the class, a lack of motivation.

Mrs. O'Neill: I do not know about graduations. I have been asked to go to kindergarten graduations and bestow diplomas and grade 6 graduations and grade 8 graduations. All of that may be useful. I am not sure. I really have not made a judgement on that. Are you suggesting another level of graduation which would tie into the certificate of education concept or grade 10 or whatever?

Ms. Fraser: I think so. I remember at the school I went to the ceremony stressed the grade 12 diploma, because that is what most of the girls attained. The grade 13s were there, but we were concerned about studying and it was supposedly honour enough to go on to university. I think I would like to do that here: to put the graduation diploma from high school at grade 10 and then you drop back into what we all consider a regular

high school now if you are going to go to university, and have no graduation after grade 12.

Mrs. O'Neill: What happens to those people who are going to benefit from continuing in school after grade 10? I do go to graduations at schools where there is basic-level programming—and many of them go right into the workforce and do it quite well—and the general-level people. I have trouble with what happens to them at the end of this rather regimented program you have. I feel there will be people who will be dropping out earlier, I suppose. Maybe it will not be called dropping out because they will have a graduation, but I am not sure that is helpful.

Ms. Fraser: They are always welcome to come back and take the programs that are still there.

Mrs. O'Neill: But you said just earlier that they would be likely going to university, the people who came back.

Ms. Fraser: I hope what I said was that if they wanted to go to university, they would come back and take the curriculum as it is now. If they were going to go to an apprenticeship program, they could come back and take our co-op program or work experience or some kind of package as the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation has described. I am not shunting them out, if they wish to return, but I just think they will come back with more purpose in mind. Right now, a lot of our general-level kids are just sort of floating around unsure of what they are doing.

Mrs. O'Neill: Do you think teacher education would help them?

Ms. Fraser: How?

Mrs. O'Neill: I am just suggesting it would stop them from floating rather than what I consider a rather radical suggestion on your part. Is there good in-service you could see? You obviously seem to be quite devoted to your students.

Ms. Fraser: I wish there were. I wish we knew the answer. We have been living with this for years: how to increase the motivation of our general-level students. We do not have a lot of solutions.

Madam Chairman: Sometimes that is part of the problem. We raise more questions than we do answers. I think it is very stimulating at least to consider some of the questions in our search for the answers. Thank you very much for your presentation today.

I would mention to members that we do have an addition to the agenda. There was a group on

the waiting list, the Windsor Home and School Council, a group of parents, an umbrella group in Windsor. I have suggested to them that as their brief is exactly that, quite brief, they would perhaps like a 15-minute time allocation in order to go through their brief and perhaps answer some questions from members. Would the Windsor Home and School Council like to come forward, please? The brief was distributed to members this morning. You should have it in your package.

Good morning, Mrs. Turner.

Mrs. Turner: Good morning. Thank you for hearing us today.

WINDSOR HOME AND SCHOOL COUNCIL

Mrs. Turner: I am Bette Turner and I have been involved with Windsor Home and School Council and with home and school at the regional level. Mrs. Jo Anne Percy, the current president, has been able to come with me this morning. I would like to go over basically what we said in our brief which, as you said, is fairly straightforward.

Concerning streaming, we feel that it has been around for ever in the school classrooms, especially elementary. All primary teachers group their students for reading and it is not unusual for groups within a specific class to use different books at different times. The implementation of the child-centred philosophy of education will probably eliminate the need for streaming even within the classrooms, from an educator's point of view.

At the secondary level, the need to divide classes into advanced, general and basic has led to a lot of confusion for everyone, especially parents and students. If parents have been closely monitoring their children's programs and progress and have an open rapport with teachers, realistic decisions may be made at grade 9 programs.

Since most parents do not understand what has and is happening in education, and students are excellent con artists at this age, making the decisions is very difficult. Most students in the advanced courses seem to be making realistic, informed decisions. Many general-level students should be in the advanced-level courses, but do not make this choice because it means work. The students are under the misconception that an 80-plus at the general level is better than working for a 60-plus at the advanced level. Students who should take the basic-level courses are failing the general-level courses due to the perceived stigma of basic-level courses. The whole situation is

very desperate for the majority of our secondary school students, those caught in the middle in the general level.

Grade promotion: The question is, do children pass because they have completed the course or because they have mastered the content? There is always going to have to be some flexibility. Each case will have to be decided on its own merits. It does not make sense to promote a student without a foundation in mathematics when a good foundation is needed to proceed with the subject. Possibly the fairest situation would be a discussion of the actual child with the teacher concerned, the parents and a member of administration.

Students do mature at different ages; this is especially obvious in the differences between boys and girls at puberty. Often promotion, when there is a very grey area, pays off the next year in a more committed student. In the secondary schools, the individual timetable permits the student to complete courses at the appropriate level of difficulty for each child and each course.

Semestering: Semestering is gradually winning converts and is used extensively in university and community colleges. There are times when students have to relearn skills because they do not take a subject for a year or more, such as mathematics and foreign languages. On the other hand, studying fewer subjects at one time allows for more in-depth studies and more demanding assignments. Many secondary schools are finding the middle ground by having two-day-cycle timetables, which is possibly the best of both worlds for the students and the teachers.

OSIS: It really is too new to evaluate. The first students have just completed the first four-year program and evaluation time is required. I am sure a lot of comments will be forthcoming from universities and community colleges in the next few years. Most students think they will be able to fast-track and complete all of the requirements in four years. To do that, they have to be excellent students and take some courses during the summer or at night school. They also eliminate many optional courses that may be very beneficial to them in the long run. Students who do this are also at risk of finding themselves without a prerequisite subject that may be either necessary or advantageous at the university or community college level. Fast-tracking is done at the risk of eliminating a lot of options later on.

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The OSIS diploma students receive will have to be more explicit. The executives who hire employees, new graduates, do not understand the

difference between an A in general and a B in advanced. They are confused and removed from the constantly changing educational system. They do not know what the diploma means, and the transcript is not much help to anyone not linked to education. You must be able to understand the language of education to begin to sort out what is actually taking place and what it really means. Since the terminology of education is constantly changing, parents and employers are constantly confused, floundering and exasperated. One way to help solve this confusion is a massive advertising campaign and in-depth documentaries at both levels of government, provincial and local, and at home and school associations. This should assist in making everyone aware of the many ongoing changes in education.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Just before we go to questions, I would like a point of clarification. Under semestering, you have said, "Many secondary schools are finding the middle ground by having two-day-cycle timetables, which is possibly the best of both worlds for the students and teachers." Would this be the situation where a student would take the full range of courses for that year but take them every second day, and they would be longer time periods? For instance, they may be an 80-minute time period instead of the traditional period.

Mrs. Turner: That is happening in many secondary schools; so a student has to prepare for only four subjects a day, and the same with the teacher.

Madam Chairman: It is really looking at the best of both worlds. It has part of the semestering concept in that they are longer time periods; however, if a student misses two weeks, it is not as devastating, because he does not miss as much in that one particular subject.

Mrs. Turner: That is a real problem with secondary school students. If they do have an illness and miss two weeks of school, they have missed a lot in a semestered system.

Madam Chairman: That was pointed out to us for the first time by some parents in Toronto. It is interesting that we have not had that many parent groups, but you are echoing the same idea.

Mrs. Turner: Very definitely.

Madam Chairman: We might like to look at a compromise.

Mr. Mahoney: I really would like to thank you for the brief. I am glad we were able to get you on the agenda, because I find it really rather refreshing. Many of the groups we have been

hearing from have presented excellent briefs, but they have been from more of a professional perspective within the industry rather than perhaps the down-to-earth, commonsense approach of being a parent. Being a father of three teenage boys, I can tell you that your statement about making the choice because it means work is right on. I firmly believe that kids generally, maybe even all people generally—kids are people, are they not?

Madam Chairman: Sometimes.

Mr. Mahoney: Sometimes. I think they seek a comfort level, and if they can survive at a certain comfort level, they will choose too often to do that instead of being pushed and having to work a little harder.

If you were given a choice, as a parent, of making the decision at the end of grade 8, when the kids are conning you, as you say—and they do not stop, either, after grade 8—

Mrs. Turner: I know.

Mr. Mahoney:—if you were given a choice of streaming them at that point and having them understand that there are bridges for them to move, someone said today "across," but in reality up into perhaps the advanced level at some point—that is one choice. The other choice would be that you do not make that decision at all until grade 10. You do not even deal with the streaming concept until the end of grade 10, so you stream in grades 11 and 12. Which would you prefer?

Mrs. Turner: If it was my choice as a parent today, it would be the choice to make a decision the later the better. The older the child is, the better he has an opportunity; because boys, specifically, mature at a later age and they do not take secondary school seriously until maybe grade 12.

Mr. Mahoney: I think our chairman probably agrees that boys mature later than women. Just from running the committee, I think that is probably her feeling. Excellent comments.

Mr. Keyes: She has had so many of them on the committee.

Mrs. Turner: I speak from experience, having two boys.

Madam Chairman: Yes. I am still waiting for some of the boys on this committee to grow up.

Mr. Mahoney: I have not decided what I am going to do when I grow up yet, so you just wait.

Madam Chairman: Being the mother of a 13-year-old boy and a 10-year-old daughter who

are about the same level in maturity, I can probably vouch for that comment.

Mr. Reycraft: I hear what you are saying about making the choices later because kids will be more mature when they make them. How can we be assured they would be any better informed about the implications of the choice? That is really what the problem is, from what you have said and from what others have said. Many of the choices that are made by students entering grade 9 are uninformed choices. How could we be sure they would be better informed at the end of grade 9 or at the end of grade 10 than they are now at the end of grade 8?

Mrs. Percy: I think I can help a little bit. I think you need to have more guidance in the classroom from the classroom teacher about their specific subjects and I think you need to have more guidance generally at the guidance office.

Mr. Reycraft: Why is that going to happen in grade 9 or grade 10? Why can it not happen in grade 8?

Mrs. Percy: I think it should happen in grades 7 and 8 too. You were talking specifically about grade 9, so that is how I answered it. They have mandated more guidance into grades 7 and 8. I do not have children in the primary schools any more and I do not know how well it is working. But I think more needs to be done.

The kids sometimes will go down and have their mandatory guidance interview. I will ask my children, "What did you talk about?" "Oh, the usual thing, you know. Didn't say much." It just drives you bananas, really. I think there has to be a way to get the kids to take seriously that they are making decisions. I think they do not think they are making decisions for the rest of their lives. It is hard for us to get through to them. I speak as a wife of a teacher too, by the way. It is very, very hard.

I want to make one comment about the people back a couple of sessions ago. They talked about a school year calendar and the Eastern Ontario Regional Education Council proposal. I liked it very much. We have kicked it around at Windsor council for quite a while and not realized that you could really put a proposal in and get some input on it. It certainly had a lot of merit. The only phrase we would like to change would be to call it the winter break and not the Christmas break. The race relations committee she is on would not like those kinds of phrases very much. Other than that, it is a great proposal.

Madam Chairman: Are there any other questions?

Mr. Reycraft: If I could, I have another along the same line. You have said that you think many general-level students are not choosing advanced-level courses simply because the general-level ones are easier. We have heard from a lot of people who have said that parents and students, in making the choice, try to do so in a way that leaves open as many options as possible, and therefore, many more students than should be selecting advanced-level courses in grade 9. In fact, since OSIS was implemented in 1984, the number of students proportionately taking advanced-level credits in grade 9 has gone up significantly. It seems to me that what you are suggesting is an experience completely different from that. I just want to make sure that is the case.

Mrs. Turner: I think because of the way OSIS has been presented and is perceived, if you start at the top in grade 9, you can go down; it is very, very difficult to upgrade. I think that is why you find so many grade 9 students starting at the advanced level because it is much easier to drop down a level than it is to go up a level.

Mrs. Percy: I think waiting for the streaming to come a little later would eliminate those kinds of decisions in grade 9. The kids just are not mature enough to make that kind of decision.

Mr. Reycraft: All right, but I—

Mrs. Percy: Or the parents either, for that matter. A lot of parents are not as educated as some.

Mr. Reycraft: I need some help then, because I see a contradiction between what you have just said about students selecting advanced-level courses in grade 9 and what you have said in your brief about general-level students who should be in advanced-level courses.

Mrs. Turner: I think what it ends up being is that the students possibly are not making informed decisions. Therefore, if they are being pushed, they will take the advanced level because that way they can drop down, but most parents in the community have kids come home and say: "This is what they think I should take. We don't have to worry about it. You just have to sign it here because I need it at 9 o'clock this morning." What the students themselves are selecting is the general level.

It all depends which point of view you are looking at, whether you are looking at what the students are coming home and conning their parents into or what the parents are actually trying to make their students do. We have a very mixed community here with a lot of parents who

are recent immigrants and they find our educational system very difficult to understand, including language problems, and this is a problem within the system. They are doing all they can to work with it, but parents from other countries are very, very reluctant to go and ask questions of officials.

Madam Chairman: In view of the comments you have just made, would you consider it appropriate to make it mandatory for parents to have an interview with the guidance counsellor personally before any decision is made about a child's future, rather than the system as it is now where the parent just signs a piece of paper without that direct contact?

Mrs. Turner: Mandatory is very difficult. There would have to be all sorts of things done to put the parents at ease entering the school, because it is looked at as an official situation. They are trying to do it in specific areas in the community and it takes a long time to grow. You almost have to work through the ethnic councils—and there has to be translation available. Most of the time, the translators are the children.

Madam Chairman: So you might like to have them, but in a more relaxed setting where people are not forced to actually do it; where they are encouraged.

Mrs. Turner: With translators other than the children.

Madam Chairman: Right.

Mr. Mahoney: If they do not show, you give them a detention.

Madam Chairman: I suspect whoever wrote this brief has children of that age if they call them con artists.

Mrs. O'Neill: May I ask a question?

Madam Chairman: Yes, if you could keep it very brief. I will mention for the members that the clerk has checked out for us in the hotel. However, we were supposed to give in our keys and take our baggage out by 12.

Mrs. O'Neill: Most of us did not have the luxury of being in the hotel.

May I ask you if your group is doing the work of trying to help parents understand the difference between these three levels? Are you having workshops? Are they being responded to? Your brief seems to indicate in several places that there is such massive confusion out there about what is actually available.

Mrs. Turner: We are trying. It is very difficult to have parents come out. In this community, most people who are employed are on shift work and they have rotating shifts, so trying to set up anything with any uniformity is very difficult, but every so often we have specific programs where we do try.

Mrs. O'Neill: Do your boards—you relate to the one board, do you?

Mrs. Turner: That is right, to the Windsor board.

Mrs. O'Neill: Do you help in the preparation of student-parent handbooks? Are parents having input into that kind of thing?

Mrs. Turner: Our board is most co-operative and aware of the situation and has included parents at many levels.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is good. May I ask one question about the bottom of the page when you say, "Often promotion, when there is a very grey area, pays off the next year in a more committed student." Is that a statement on behalf of social promotion, so to speak?

Mrs. Turner: Possibly, and the other way is that the student just does not have the maturity that year, but next year he realizes he has been given an extra opportunity and he will work harder.

Mrs. O'Neill: And it goes for both elementary and secondary that you say that?

Mrs. Turner: Elementary more so.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Windsor Home and School Council for its presentation. As Mr. Mahoney said, it was very down to earth and I think a very refreshing breath of air for our committee. You might be able to take advantage, if time permits, of the London Council of Home and School Associations presentation at two o'clock. You might find it interesting to compare notes.

Mrs. Turner: Yes. Thank you very much. I hope that at a later date we will be able to discuss funding, because that is a very important issue.

Madam Chairman: We cannot make promises, but it is certainly one of the considerations for a future agenda item.

Mrs. Turner: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. The select committee on education stands adjourned until two o'clock sharp.

The committee adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2 p.m. in the Erie Room, Hilton Hotel, Windsor, Ontario.

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to call to order the meeting of the select committee on education as we continue our hearings on the organizational process in education in Ontario, including streaming, semestering, grade promotion and OSIS.

We are pleased to welcome to our committee today the London Council of Home and School Associations. It is always good to get input from our parent groups, so we particularly welcome you. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation. We hope there will be plenty of time within that time frame for members' questions. Please begin whenever you are ready. Would you start by introducing yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard?

LONDON COUNCIL OF HOME AND
SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

Mrs. Mason: Good afternoon. First of all, I would like to introduce, on my right, Joyce Bennett, past president of London Council Home and School. On my left we have Marian Obeda, who is the chairman of the resolution committee for London Council Home and School.

London Council Home and School welcomes the opportunity to speak to this committee, to present our views and concerns regarding the education system. We believe that the Ontario publicly funded education system is one of the finest in the world. Great care must be taken to ensure that when changes are implemented, the system is not weakened and fragmented. With that in mind, I would like to read the introduction of our brief, which I imagine you have in front of you.

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Mrs. Mason: Members of the London Council of Home and School Associations have always stressed the importance of providing all students with equal opportunity to receive quality education and services so that they can achieve the credits they desire for post-secondary education and skills for the workplace.

The following is offered as essential to achieve this: well-qualified teachers who continue to receive staff development through their local board; the widest possible selection of subject choices and options; well-equipped resource centres with updated computer programs and

data; parents as partners in education; greater emphasis on remedial assistance programs and guidance programs; literacy for every student—there is a strong correlation between illiteracy and unemployment which fosters loss of confidence and low self-esteem; smaller class size; curriculum under continual review, and new money from the ministry available for capital projects.

Students are also entitled to be taught using ministry guidelines so that the students will be prepared for post-secondary education.

The government of Ontario and boards of education are faced with some difficult decisions. Education dollars must end up in the classroom rather than in increased administrative costs. Funds must be continually available for staff development and curriculum updating. Society today cannot continue to bear the burden of illiteracy. Every student should be taught to read, write and think on his or her own, to be able to deal with his or her environment intelligently. Our constant goal must be the best educational opportunities for each child according to his or her physical, mental and social needs.

Mrs. Obeda: With regard to streaming, currently in Ontario, secondary school courses are available at three levels of difficulty: basic, general and advanced. The implementation of a single educational stream for all students is not practical and could have negative effects on student retention.

Students in basic-level courses learn basic literacy skills to hold down a job and be independent. Some parents feel that the self-esteem of vocational students can best be nurtured in basic-level secondary schools, while other parents would disagree with this. Certain subjects, such as music, art, physical and health education, could be accommodated in a single-level stream. However, teaching such courses as mathematics and science in a single-level stream could have serious implications.

At the intermediate level, students are at a highly emotional time in their lives. Decisions regarding the level of courses they should be taking may have a significant effect on their future. It is for this reason that some parents would like to see decisions re streaming held off until after grade 10. Such an idea would require a great deal of research. Parents would like to know if there are any studies to show whether or

not students who are streamed into lower-level courses are more apt to drop out.

Mrs. Bennett: With regard to OSIS, this system offers a student a wide variety of courses and a chance to complete his or her secondary education in four years. This is something that was long overdue in Ontario. The mere fact that students are compelled to take certain courses addresses the parental concerns about getting back to the basics. We see this as a positive step in improving the quality of the graduate. Illiteracy is a main problem for all of society. It costs the taxpayers millions of dollars annually. These costs could be reduced by educating our students.

There is a definite need for improvement in the guidance program at the secondary level. Today, many of the problems that teachers must deal with are serious social problems. There should be more resource counsellors in the schools to provide information and counselling on such matters, because they affect the education of the students. This counselling could be done in co-operation with social service agencies.

The curriculum for OSIS programs must be under continual review. Courses that are updated at the senior level must also be updated at the intermediate level and so on through the system. Increased funding is required to accomplish this. The courses offered by schools must continue to reflect the various levels of the workforce, i.e., labourers, white-collar workers and professional workers.

We must also address the problem of class size. In 1988, at the annual meeting of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, a resolution to petition the government of Ontario, the Ministry of Education and the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward) re class size was passed unanimously by the membership. London Council of Home and Schools was one of the submitting units of this resolution. New money must continue to be made available to reduce class size.

Staff development is necessary to ensure continuous growth and to assist people in accommodating change. Time and funds must be made available for teachers to take refresher courses in their field. Rapid advancement in technology and global communications expose the students to a constantly changing environment and teachers must be equipped to deal with this. Professional development days provide one opportunity for such courses.

Mrs. Mason: With regard to grading, the whole language program has been instrumental

in helping to achieve success in primary classes progressing at upgraded levels. Every effort should be made by the principal, teachers, resource personnel and parents to ensure that students unable to keep up with the work at their grade level be identified as soon as possible and be given remedial help.

At the intermediate elementary school level, students who have received remedial help and have not achieved success should have the option of attending summer school to upgrade their marks. If they are still not successful, a decision on whether to retain them at their present grade level should be made. Every effort should be made by the school personnel to keep parents involved.

At the intermediate secondary school level, programs such as "save-a-credit" and "teach-to-pass" are designed to encourage students to remain in school. These programs boost a student's self-esteem, and at the same time students do not lose a course or, in some cases, a year.

Students should be taught good study habits early in their school life and encouraged to achieve their best, so that the stress to attain marks acceptable for college and university will not be so great during their senior year.

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Mrs. Bennett: With regard to semestering, parents have mixed opinions on the subject of semestering. It has both positive and negative aspects.

1. The attention span of most students is 25 to 30 minutes. With 75-minute periods, a major portion of the period is used by the teacher to assist with assignments. Students may come to understand a smaller portion of the course better but be left in the long run with less knowledge.

2. Dealing with only four subjects at a time reduces stress at examination time.

3. Since marks come out sooner under semestering, teachers are able to identify students having difficulty sooner.

4. In a semestered system, a two- or three-week illness can spell disaster.

5. Most boards hire only once a year; timetabling must be done only once a year as well. Therefore, a certain amount of flexibility in courses is lost. Timetabling affects the sequencing of subjects and conflicts arise as students attempt to fast-track.

6. Semestering is detrimental to music and arts courses. These courses are important in the education of the student. Schools must do a lot of

timetable adjusting to accommodate these programs.

7. Prolonged gaps of time in courses may destroy all of the gains made the previous year.

8. Students and teachers have a better opportunity to get to know one another, as teachers are dealing with half as many students at one time. Unfortunately, some students, particularly those with an unstable home life, just begin to feel comfortable with one teacher and then must move on.

9. Some students are able to complete their course of study in January. This enables them to work for several months before going on in education. However, university entrance time should be revised to accept students in January.

10. Co-operative programs, bridging the gap between the workforce and education, are successful in the semestered system. Students can learn the disciplines of the workplace as well as catching up on the latest technologies. More significantly, they can earn secondary school credits while learning on the job.

Even though teachers, students and administration for the most part seem to like the semestered system, none can say that students get a better education under this arrangement.

At the annual conference of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations in 1988, a resolution was passed to petition the Minister of Education to undertake a full study of the effects of semestering on the quality of education in the secondary schools in Ontario and asking that this study be completed by January 1990. We, the London Council of Home and School Associations, strongly support this resolution.

Mrs. Mason: In conclusion, we wish to thank the select committee on education for the opportunity to express the parents' concern in these particular areas of education.

Home and school associations in London recognize the need for developing an educational system which can meet the present and future needs of our young people. However, it is important to recognize that in making any changes, new funding from the ministry would have to be forthcoming.

In conclusion, we feel we must reiterate that any forthcoming legislation must be in the best interest of the students. That is why we are here, to ensure that each child has the best educational opportunities according to his or her physical, mental and social needs.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation. We have a number of mem-

bers who have indicated they have questions. We will start with Mr. Reycraft, followed by Mr. Keyes.

Mr. Reycraft: I want to thank the London council for coming to Windsor to make the presentation to us this afternoon.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: It is so nice to see people having to come down this way because we are so used to going the other way.

Interjections.

Mrs. Mason: We did get lost.

Mr. Bossy: You want to be in the middle, so you always go one way or another.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Reycraft, you were saying?

Mr. Reycraft: I am sorry I brought that all up now. The section on streaming gives us both sides of a number of different issues, but you have avoided, and I assume it is deliberately, stating what the position is of the London council.

There are two particular areas I would like to question you about. The first one is the reference made in the third paragraph about basic-level secondary schools as opposed to, I assume, composite schools where all three levels are offered in the same school. Is that the case at any London secondary schools? Are there any London secondary schools that offer all three levels of difficulty, or are basic-level courses offered only at Thames Secondary School and Sir George Ross Secondary School?

Mrs. Mason: Only at Thames and Ross.

Mr. Reycraft: Has that issue been debated by the London council, whether that is the best way to educate secondary students since OSIS was implemented four years ago?

Mrs. Mason: As a matter of fact it has. It is for that reason that we did deliberately do it this way, because the London council is very divided on this as well.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Why do I have the feeling you knew the answer to that one?

Mr. Reycraft: In fact, I did not know the answer to the question. It seems to me that the system in place there, as it is in a lot of other cities in this province, was put in place long before OSIS was implemented. It is perhaps appropriate that some reflection of that system occur now that we have a new program for secondary school diploma requirements. I assume that is what has been the cause of the debate within your council. Do you expect to be able to develop a council

position on it in the near future, or are you just going to agree to disagree and leave it at that?

Mrs. Mason: I think perhaps we are going to do a little more research and see if we cannot get a few more expert opinions on it and probably bring in a little more of the administrative staff and hear it from their point of view as well.

Mr. Reycraft: We have heard a lot about the difficulty that students in basic-level courses have in moving to a more general-level program. While that is certainly difficult in any school, including a composite school, it is much more so in the situation you have in London, where they cannot go to any other school and take mixed-level general and basic courses at the same time.

Mrs. Mason: I think we do mention that there are certain subjects they can take at any level. Probably this is why we wonder if there cannot be some integration there somewhere, when they are emphasizing integration so much throughout the rest of the system. We would like to see something happen.

Mr. Reycraft: You have also commented that some students would like to see streaming deferred until after grade 10. Is that a position of the council now, or is that something else that is still under debate and on which there is a divided position?

Mrs. Bennett: I would say there tends to be a little more consensus towards having the decisions made later, as late as grade 10.

Mr. Reycraft: Could you tell us a bit about the reasons to support that near consensus?

Mrs. Bennett: A lot of parents feel that coming out of grade 8 the students are not ready, perhaps not mature enough to make choices, or that in their own minds they have not decided where they want to go, whether they want to go to college or university or just what they want to do with the rest of their lives.

Some have made up their minds, but a lot of them coming out of grade 8 really do not know where they want to end up. Making the kind of decision a lot of them make towards taking the advanced courses just so they will not cut off any avenues is not always the best for students. I think that is what we are finding. They get themselves in over their heads and maybe they really do not have to.

Mr. Reycraft: Is that the general situation in your opinion, that most students try to take advanced-level courses, if at all possible, so they keep as many options open as they can?

Mrs. Bennett: I think in a lot of cases they do.

Mr. Reycraft: Certainly the statistics we have on the numbers of students enrolled in advanced-level courses on a proportionate basis after OSIS compared to those before OSIS would indicate that that is happening.

In your opinion, how involved are parents in the option selection process at the grade 9 level?

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Mrs. Bennett: That it is kind of difficult to answer. It depends on the parent. There are involved parents and there are parents who are not involved in anything: education or hockey registration. There are parents who just let the kids make the choices. As the group was saying this morning, they bring the paper in and you sign it on the dotted line. I would not go as far as to say the parents do not care but they are not as involved with what their children are doing—or informed I guess would be another word too.

Mrs. Mason: Excuse me, if I could jump in here for a minute, I do have a student who has just this year gone into grade 9. There has been a definite improvement in the London board in terms of parental involvement. They made an all-out effort this year to include—they did bring a resource counsellor in from the secondary schools.

They worked with students. That did have to come home to the parent to be signed. If there were any questions, they were invited to come back to the school. In that respect, in the London system anyway, I think they have certainly improved.

Mr. Reycraft: If the system were changed so that students in grades 9 and 10 did take common courses so that streaming were deferred until third year in secondary school, do you think parents would be any better informed about choices that their children make than they are now?

Mrs. Obeda: I do not know that the parents would be more informed but the children would have a better idea of what they want to do and would be more mature, make a more mature judgement.

Mr. Reycraft: Do you not think, though, that they would still try to select courses so that they could keep open as many options as possible, even if you deferred the whole thing by two years?

Mrs. Obeda: Yes.

Mr. Reycraft: Do you not think that there is a danger if we did that we would have students finding their most appropriate level of difficulty perhaps not until their fourth year in secondary

school, instead of second or third year where it appears to be happening now? Is there not a danger to delaying the whole streaming process by two years?

Mrs. Mason: I would tend to agree with you on that. One of my concerns—and I am speaking not for the council at this point but as a parent—one of the things I am seeing is that if the student excels in a certain area, instead of being advised to take that course at an advanced level, he or she is being advised to take other courses at the advanced level.

We do not all excel in everything that we do. I think the flexibility in this system allows you to take a course at a general level and a course at an advanced level. I do not think that is coming home to the parents. I do not think we are getting that point across. I think it could be a very good point.

Mr. Reycraft: Do you think it is understood by elementary school personnel in making recommendations to graduating students? You are shaking your head no.

Mrs. Mason: I am shaking my head so it cannot be recorded.

Madam Chairman: We have just about five minutes left. We have Mr. Johnston followed by Mr. Keyes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just to come back to this point Mr. Reycraft is making, do you not think that there is a danger, however, in terms of presuming that it is the same for a child in grade 8, that the consequences will be the same as those for a grade 10 child in making this decision? There is a danger that there are lot of kids at that level who are being told very early on that their options are limited.

We have no hard evidence as yet, just some anecdotal evidence that there is greater flexibility since OSIS for people to move up. But there is no real hard evidence that kids who are not being streamed in grades 7 and 8 by their elementary panel teachers to go into basic-level courses are going to be shut off until grade 10. They are shut off totally at the moment at grade 8, whereas if you left them that transition into high school where maybe their maturation would change and maybe the different system would allow them to adjust, then they would be able to make the more intelligent decision and would not have this sort of notion at the end of grade 10 that all their options have to be left open. Rather, they would have a much better shot at making the decisions about what their appropriate courses were.

That is the other side of Mr. Reycraft's leading question; that is my leading question and answer.

Mrs. Mason: You answered it very well.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: So we have a consensus on that from this part of the council? Good.

This is not a question, I will just pose this. If you are interested in getting more information on the whole question of streaming, we have been getting in an awful lot of information. One of the things you could avail yourselves of would be Hansard, which will be coming from our hearings. After you have seen that, the clerk's office can also make available any of the briefs you think might be of interest.

It comes to mind when you ask the question, "Are there any studies that show that basic-stream kids fail?" Yes, there are some. The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association had a great listing of most of the studies that have been done on streaming around the world. You could look at those and try to find those in the library as to what you would like to review in a theoretical sense, as well as bringing in experts from your own board.

For ourselves, this is all an education as well, but we have been getting some very good documentation increasingly from both sides. As we get more information from the ministry, post-OSIS, we should have even more up-to-date information from the Ontario experience which groups like yours could have a look at and have some meaningful input.

Mr. Keyes: Thank you for presenting today. I know there is another group that came back from this morning's presentations, so they could meet with you this afternoon, that is, the Windsor Home and School Council. We invited them and they are sitting here. I am sure you can get together over a coffee and chat about some of these issues.

Mr. Johnston has just referred to the studies. I was going to give you my copy of our handout of today. It was from the press, from last Thursday's presentation, which talked about the very definite evidence that shows that students in high schools across Ontario who have chosen the basic level did show a higher degree of dropout than those who had been in the general and advanced levels. So they are there.

I think what the group this morning said and what you are saying is what I observe as one of the greatest crying needs of parents, to be much more aware of just what is happening in our schools. We have to devise a system so that parents can be much more involved. Teachers themselves, first of all, have to learn not to be

frightened by that, because parents are not trying to take away their positions from them. I have spent a lifetime in teaching and I used to find a bit of hesitancy by teachers for fear that the parents' involvement meant they were going to lose their jobs, literally.

What we are really looking for is how we can be more informed of what is happening from a very early age on. We need to spend more time thinking about that as a society, as home and school groups and as the Ministry of Education. Once we get more open forums, once we have board and home and school sponsored information nights for parents, once it is an ongoing type of thing so that regardless of their work schedules, whether it be shift or otherwise, parents can feel free to drop in and get this type of information, then probably we will do a better job communicating.

Part of it also means that as a ministry we cannot continually change every two or three years. We have to leave time for the parents to catch up on what is really happening and to be as aware as their sons and daughters are.

Going back to your own presentation, one thing it continually refers to is the need for additional funding in specific areas if we are going to achieve some of the things you want. I would pose the question as to whether or not you feel society is prepared to spend more dollars in the particular field of education and, if so, in what way.

Today's press carries the results of a study done over the past two or three weeks which says that society is certainly not prepared to have more dollars go to teachers' salaries, very definitely. But it did not ask the other question, whether society was prepared to spend a lot more money on education itself to bring about some of the other changes.

I am really wondering, as a council, what your own opinion is. You say more funding is needed. I pointed out at least three places where you have said, "New funding will have to be there." You talk about capital projects, about in-service training for teachers and a third area. Do you really think society is prepared to spend more on education?

I look at it from the point of health, with which I am highly involved. We spend a third of every dollar on health. How about education?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Illness.

Mr. Keyes: Yes, illness, or the absence of illness.

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Mrs. Mason: I would like to say that society does feel this way, but I agree with you, the apathy is very evident. However, I do feel there is perhaps something we can do in the education line, whether it takes advertising or whatever. These are leaders of tomorrow. This is the future of this country, and I think the parents are not aware of it.

It is probably time we took a little harder stand on it and said it. Perhaps with a little bit more focusing on this particular aspect, the value of that student, we could get a little more public support. I would not think that everybody is going to come our way, but I certainly think it would not hurt us.

Mr. Keyes: Maybe some of the dollars could be spent by boards in co-operation with home and school associations, which do not have funds, to do a better public relations job on education. We see some good examples around the province where boards make a very conscious decision to spend a fair dollar on the public relations image of their particular boards. I can think of several.

Mrs. Mason: It is very much happening in London.

Mr. Keyes: And East York, with its double bite out of the McIntosh apple, etc. There are a few things of that nature that work.

When you talk of capital projects, do we not have to change a bit of society's thinking in general? In my opinion, we cannot begin to think of schools without parents. This is not part of our agenda, I realize. I just throw it out to you because you are parents, who are a very broad spectrum of the whole province. If it were not for those of us who are parents, there would not be a school system.

Interjection.

Mr. Keyes: That is right, Richard, because, you know, there would not be any children for the system. Do you get the point?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just do not think sequentially.

Mr. Keyes: I see. That is your problem.

Madam Chairman: Perhaps we could be as brief as possible, because we do have a time restraint.

Mr. Keyes: Yes, right. My point is simply the fact that we should be looking at perhaps the private sector to provide some of our school facilities in major cities so that we are not building schools which then become empty in 20 or 25 years. We wonder what to do with them and we sell them. Perhaps the the developers of large centres should be the ones who are charged with

the responsibility of providing educational facilities, which are then leased by the school board until they are finished with them and then they become used for other community uses. Do we not have to change our thinking to a great extent in the large urban areas of the province? I will leave you to think about that.

Mrs. Mason: That is a very interesting concept. I think it is something that would certainly have to be looked at, but it is not totally unrealistic either.

Mr. Keyes: Day care centres, primary schools, etc., should be in some of the large apartment buildings, as part of them.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the London Council of Home and School Associations—I wanted to make sure I had the right name—for its presentation today and for its contribution to our committee. As I said, we are always delighted when parents come forward on their own initiative. We know how few resources you have, and it makes your contribution that much more valuable.

Mrs. Mason: If I could just have the last word, I would like to say that London council is doing a lot of the things that Mr. Keyes has just pointed out here. In terms of PR work, we are working with our London Women Teachers' Association and our men teachers' association to get away from this idea that teachers feel somewhat threatened when parents get into a school. We are trying to overcome that. As well, we run several workshops to try to get our parents involved and inform the parents. That is just a little commercial advertisement.

Mr. Keyes: Very good. I am glad you are doing that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is what happened in Glencoe.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for that unpaid, nonpolitical announcement.

Our next presentation will be by the Windsor Board of Education. Would you come forward please.

Good afternoon and welcome to our committee. We have allocated one-half hour of time for your presentation. I know you have a lot to say; so we will continue without any further ado. Would you introduce yourself in the beginning for purposes of electronic Hansard before you go into your presentation? We are hoping that you will leave enough time in the half-hour presentation for questions from the members. Please begin.

WINDSOR BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Willms: I am Walter Willms, director of education. I am certainly pleased to be here a second time today to be part of another presentation.

Madam Chairman: Welcome back.

Mr. Willms: Earlier in the summer, I asked my senior staff if it would prepare position papers for discussion and debate, first, among ourselves; second, with our trustees; and third, with the select committee. We agreed to do so. In fact, we have focused on two of the areas that concern you today: streaming and some comments on OSIS.

We prepared a position paper, a staff paper, and we took it to our board. Our board was excited about some of the things we were saying or not saying but wished to have further opportunity to debate and discuss the paper that we had presented to you. In fact, arrangements have been made with our board to have further discussion and debate on Wednesday evening of this week. Therefore, what we are presenting to you has not been amended, modified, endorsed or vetoed by the Windsor Board of Education; it is a staff position.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you very much, Walter, for being so honest.

Mr. Willms: I am pleased to introduce, on my immediate right, Michael Saffran, superintendent of operations, and Stephen Payne, superintendent of program. Michael will then be assisted by Jack Cheswick, superintendent of instruction, and Steve Payne will be assisted in the presentation by Val Pistor, co-ordinator with responsibilities in curriculum and professional development. I might also announce at this time that Steve Payne has been named to be my successor and I am proud he is here today in that double capacity. Michael Saffran will lead our presentation.

Mr. Keyes: You are obviously taking early retirement.

Mr. Willms: Some of us started before child labour laws came into effect.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Payne, we will start off by congratulating you before you begin your presentation. After that disclaimer and disassociation from the board, we are all ears and awaiting anxiously to hear your comments.

Mr. Saffran: Thank you for the opportunity to be here this afternoon before you. I did have an opportunity this summer to visit Queen's Park when you had started your deliberations, I think

it was in July, so I have some sense of how the proceedings go, and I was here this morning as well to hear the presentation of the Ontario Association of Education Administrative Officials.

We are going to talk about streaming in the first part. Rather than read our paper, which I am sure you have done, I would like to do it this way. We will make some major statements that are the theme of the paper and perhaps, like the boxer, throw a few punches and then look for some kind of a counter from you in the form of questions, because I think that is where the meaningful interchange takes place, in the questions and answers that come up.

Madam Chairman: Yes. The current procedure of the committee is that we will await your final presentation and then we will hit you all at once with the punches, if that is all right.

Mr. Saffran: Very good. We expect that. I will just start off by saying this. There is no doubt in our minds, the four of us and the director who sat and did some of the talking about the issues, that streaming is here, has been and always will be. It is a fact, and I need not draw comparisons in the athletic world and perhaps point out what Ben Johnson did. To think that I could run against Ben Johnson would be idiotic, but nevertheless, there is a streaming that takes place.

Mr. Keyes: You could run, but you not might beat him.

Mr. Saffran: I could run, but I would not be very fast.

Certainly, streaming has been in existence in our elementary schools and in our secondary schools, probably since time began. Really, the question then becomes one of when should you start the streaming.

When do you start this streaming? It is our opinion—and certainly one that I hold because my background is in the secondary schools and for 27 years I did work in a secondary school right from teacher on through to be principal—that one of the problems we have is that we perhaps ask young people to make decisions too early. I do not think they are mature enough nor are they prepared to make those decisions from the grade 8 to grade 9 transition. They are just not prepared.

I think it would make far more sense that we allow them an opportunity to come into a high school setting; and really we should look at the intermediate years in context, grades 7, 8, 9 and 10, not just looking at what happens at the end of grade 9 and then moving them on into high

school at the grade 9 level, because there is a very significant transition that takes place. You see a youngster coming to school for the first time, somewhat nervous, not knowing what this big thing is, this big high school he is going to come to.

Let's delay having them make that decision at that particular point in time. I think it would relieve parents of some anxiety too. As someone who has three children who have come through a high school system, I think I have an advantage. Many of us here have an advantage because we are in the education field. I think there are some parents, though, who do not have that advantage, and it must be very difficult for them, and perhaps confusing at times, to know just what to say and do.

That gap we talk of, grade 8 to grade 9, is a significant gap. I think asking a youngster to make a career choice almost at that time really does not do justice to the youngster, to the person, because there are significant changes that take place to that youngster by the time he reaches 14. Between 14 and 15, and 15 and 16 change is taking place. I think more information is needed. We are for taking off the pressure on these people and letting the natural process flow. I think that streaming is going to take place.

We did unphased courses at one time in our schools. I thought it was a good thing. Many people did not. Nevertheless, if you get those students into the school, grade 9, whether it is math, science, history, English, geography or whatever, let them come into a common grade 9 and then see what happens.

We submit that one of our difficulties, too, is that people do not learn the same way in 110-hour or 120-hour time capsules. Some may do it in that length of time, some may do it quicker and some may need a longer period of time to get to a certain standard. We think that in our province we have to look at what those basic standards are and come up with some very definite statements as to what we think they should be. We talk of literacy and we have heard criticisms of our systems, that people cannot read and cannot write, that they go on to community colleges and what is it they are doing because they have not learned to read or write properly.

Our position is one of insisting on certain basic standards. Test, find out where they are, so that the remediation can take place. We suggest that this can happen.

Every student in grade 9 does not have to take eight credits. Some may function much better with seven, perhaps with a remedial period built

in. That is a possibility. I think the fact that we have gone to five-period time slots may work well for timetabling. It does not mean that everyone will learn just as well in those five periods. I think back to when English was seven periods. Some of the math combinations were eight and seven. We have gone to five. I think we have shortchanged some of the students, from the point of view of English, by putting it into five periods across the board and thinking that we can cover that same amount of material in those five periods a week.

To conclude, there are larger numbers of students who are going into the general level the way we are set up presently. I think that is incorrect, because there are many students in that general level who I am sure could function at an advanced level, perhaps not in every subject, but in a fair number of them. I think by unphasing and not making them make a decision about advanced, general or basic, but holding on until they can sort it out for themselves in the consultation that we think should take place with the school and the home—that is a very critical thing—to let the parents and the youngster know exactly where they are.

I think that kind of interchange and that kind of discussion with the parents would go a long way towards alleviating some of the confusion and some of the misconceptions that exist in knowing where that particular youngster is at a given point in time. I think those things could happen.

I am going to stop my part of it now and pass on to Steve Payne.

Mr. Payne: I think you will find that some of the ideas Mike Saffran has presented and what I am going to present are similar in nature. I will try to avoid that duplication.

The part I am going to focus on is in terms of the OSIS reform. I think it is important to note that in 1988, a year before OSIS is due for its first cyclic review, the government has passed a report focusing on school dropouts, in which it proposes sweeping educational changes. That is the reason for the subtitle we have put on our submission, "Should We Change Paddles in Midstream?"

Notwithstanding that, we have looked at the issue and tried to develop some proposals, some ideas for this committee to consider, because we know you are getting a great many ideas. This is just a basic skeletal outline we would like to present to you.

The proposal we are going to present to you is based on two public perceptions or problems—perhaps the word "misperception" would be

better—and that is the look that people are taking at the literacy and numeracy skills of some of our graduates and the high dropout rates.

Why has the public developed these perceptions about these particular problems? Really, it revolves around the whole idea of a single diploma, the Ontario secondary school diploma, as we now have it. When we say that we graduate a student with an OSSD, we as educators have a clear understanding of what is meant by that, but the general public does not.

The person who graduates with 30 credits and may be pursuing a career as a doctor receives an OSSD. Another person who may be pursuing a career as a bricklayer or doing secretarial-type work will also graduate with an OSSD, and he or she, too, has 30 credits but we know they do not mean the same thing.

Another problem that is presented: a student who has taken the majority of his courses in a basic-level program can graduate with 30 credits and receive his OSSD. Another student may take all his or her courses at the advanced level, and perhaps after 20 courses, for whatever reason, he or she has to drop out of school—social situation, work situation or whatever. Who is the student better qualified to face society in this day and age, the student who has an OSSD with 30 credits at the basic level or that student who has taken 20 credits at the advanced level? Who is better prepared? That is rhetorical in nature, but these are some of the problems that have been presented to us.

What are some possible solutions? The ministry is committed to the idea of a single diploma, and we, too, think the idea of a single diploma is an excellent idea, but let us change how we look at what that single diploma means. Rather than have a single diploma at the end of 30 credits, we propose for consideration that there be a single common diploma issued to every pupil in Ontario who successfully completes perhaps 14 or 16 credits, of which eight or 10 are compulsory. Somewhere in those courses we develop, we should guarantee our public that when all those students receive that diploma at the end of 16 credits—we will use that number—that they have basic skills, basic numeracy skills and basic literacy skills.

What are those basic numeracy skills and literacy skills? That is something that is going to take a great deal of debate before we will ever get agreement on it. But at least we could say that when they receive that piece of paper, whatever the title may be, it is the education system's way

of saying, "We hope to guarantee that they have reached this certain level."

How, then, are we going to differentiate them? We get into streaming, and this is another way we could approach the streaming; Mike Saffran alluded to it briefly. We propose to make the differences in streaming in terms of the amount of time it would take to get that basic certificate. As you know, a credit is basically 110 hours, so the majority of students would take 110 hours to get these credits.

There are students who do very well and would not need 110 hours, and perhaps they could do it in 55 hours, so they will move through that much more quickly. Then there are those students who, for whatever reason, are going to take much longer and they may take 220 hours or even longer. A student could go to school for four years; if it was the one we called a basic-level student before and it took him four years and he got those 16 credits, at least the community, the public would know what kinds of skills he should have at the end of four years.

Where does streaming come in? After they have received this basic diploma, we propose that we then enter into another system where we would perhaps consider giving students three kinds of diplomas for what we now call their third, fourth and fifth years of school. We propose that maybe one course they could follow would be for students who are pursuing a university education or a college of applied arts and technology education.

The second one might be for those who are pursuing an apprenticeship program. The schools, the systems would have to develop courses that would meet these needs.

The third might be a system for those who are planning to enter the area of work such as clerical, labour, whatever the case may be. By that time, making the decision in the third year, I think, would be an advantage to those students who are late bloomers, because hopefully by grade 11 they would know. It gives the student who did not know what career choice he or she wanted to make at grade 9 two extra years, at which time he or she might be able to make that particular choice.

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I think in the end, too, when they do graduate with a basic diploma after 16 credits which would indicate basic literacy, the community would know what should be expected. If we went to another where they graduated and were prepared for university or apprenticeship or the world of

work, the community would also have some indication.

This is only one solution among the many you are going to have to deal with. It is one that we as a committee have kicked around. We do not even really agree 100 per cent among ourselves, but we do think it is a good point for discussion, and as instructed, all four of us would now like to attempt any questions the committee may have of us.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Based on some other meetings we have had with the Windsor board, I can see where the trustees will probably have a lively discussion. At least it seems to be moving up further in grades as to how far it thinks we should go before streaming should occur, rather than the traditional position that has been taken by the Windsor board.

I am not sure I see the total advantages of setting up what would seem to be a third level. I would have to think about a third level in the system. I can see a whole new set of bureaucrats hired within a board with a new set of expertise to go around to the various schools. What it really boils down to is that you agree with the single diploma until a certain level, and then you would like to have a whole bunch of different sets of diplomas for students, so that we really have got away from all the benefits of having a single diploma without segregating students, without labelling students in the way the system has in the past. I am not sure that would not be a step back instead of a step forward, but I would have to think about it.

Has the Windsor board done any studies to determine what types of kids go to Shawnee Secondary School and William Hands Secondary School, our two vocational schools, the feeder schools they come from, the areas of the community, the economic or racial backgrounds? Has there been any examination of those for our two vocational schools?

Mr. Saffran: I am not aware of any formal studies that have been done but a large number of the students who would go to what we call the vocational schools are at-risk kinds of students with various problems, social, learning problems, etc. Have we done a demographic study? No, we have not done that.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: How many of those students would be coming from grade 8 as opposed to going to the composite schools and then being transferred to the vocational schools?

Mr. Saffran: I would give an educated guess that it would be about half and half; in other words, from grade 8 to grade 9 of the basic level,

about 50 per cent; but then we also have some from schools who enrol, let's say, in a regular secondary school who find it very difficult and then transfer to a level where they can be more successful.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Do we know what percentage of students—or if there are many at all—who go from the two vocational schools on to St. Clair College of Arts and Technology; in other words, complete their four years at the vocational level and then take their diploma and get to post-secondary?

Mr. Saffran: I would suggest that would be a very minimal number. There are some who will graduate with general-level credits, and some of them may even come back to a regular secondary school and then from there go on to a community college, but that is the exception rather than the norm.

Mr. Payne: If I could respond, the problem we are arriving at there as a board—I guess I should not say as a board because we have not discussed it; as a superintendent of program—is that we found that the mandate of the community colleges has changed a bit.

They were originally set up to meet the needs of those students who were not university-bound, who were looking for technical courses and so forth and so on. With the number of people applying for university and the courses that are being offered at St. Clair College, we are finding that the community college in our community is becoming, and I use the term cautiously, more elitist.

Those for whom the courses were originally intended are not getting in, because students who have a grade 13 diploma—I am talking about the secondary school honour graduate diploma under the older system—are getting preference over the other students who have graduated after grade 12. They really do not have a large offering of courses for those who graduate from our basic-level programs. I would agree with Mr. Saffran that the number is very small.

Mr. Cheswick: May I just say something as well? That slight change has been very dramatic because many people—one of the home and school groups that was just here—ask the question, why are people not guided into certain courses? That was one of the problems. There was just a subtle change within the community colleges where they look to grade 13, or now Ontario academic course graduates first and foremost, and even someone with a 75 per cent average in a general-level program could be shut out.

Everyone—parents, teachers, administrators at the elementary level and then further guidance counsellors in the secondary—was guiding these children and advising, and then the end result four years later was that all of these things were closed to them. Whether it be a basic-level or a general-level student, open accessibility to community colleges is a very serious problem.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: Does the Windsor board have any remedial programs—we have asked other boards this—or transitional programs for kids who might be at the basic level or the general level and are trying to get into the advanced level?

Mr. Saffran: We have remedial programs in summer school for those students identified at the grades 7 and 8 level, who are really grades 6 and 7 who would be going into grades 7 and 8. There are courses for them to do that.

As far as the transition is concerned, we do have summer school for upgrading and for full credit courses. I do not think I could comment, though, on how many I could identify who probably would like to switch from the general to the advanced, because we have not been made aware that this is what they are trying to do. I suspect that there are some who take advanced-level courses, full credit, but as to how many there may be and whether they are transitional, I think the answer would have to be we do not know.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: There is not much other than the summer school alternative, then.

Mr. Willms: Perhaps we might mention that we have in each secondary school a learning support service, a resource that can help youngsters at whatever level they are to overcome some of the difficulties they might be experiencing.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Just as a supplementary, though, it does not deal specifically with a kid who is in, let's say, basic and wants to go to general or is in general and wants to go to advanced during the year. The only option for that student, as we are hearing it around the province, seems primarily to be a few summer school courses. OSIS, which was supposed to provide so much flexibility, has not had built into it much in the way of transitional programming guidelines or anything like that for the boards to use to assist in that kind of flexibility. Would that be accurate?

Mr. Cheswick: In my personal opinion, that is very accurate. The problem, as I see it, is not with the original intent of OSIS but with what has actually occurred; that is, the lack of flexibility

once a student in grade 8 makes that choice. It gets back to that same parent and administrator trying to advise and all of a sudden, through maturity, through just the social changes that occur—we can all make judgements, but sometimes I have seen judgements go both ways, where someone looks as if he could very easily handle the advanced program and for a variety of reasons gets into difficulty, and vice versa.

Unfortunately, if it happens at the end of grade 10 or grade 11, in most cases about all you can do is go back and repeat up through the system. Of course, if you are at grade 11 and you have taken all general-level courses, the availability is almost nil. In my estimation, when it was explained to me as an elementary school principal in the beginning, the idea was that there was going to be a great deal of flexibility in being able to move between and among levels.

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Mr. Pistor: I would like to bring up a program or curriculum viewpoint on this whole issue of streaming. I think it is related to the flexibility of moving from one level to the other. That seems to be the biggest problem with streaming, that we lock kids in very early, perhaps without their knowing at that early stage the direction they want to take.

The whole idea of developing three levels really presents a problem for curriculum planners. I have been involved on a provincial writing team for the new geography guideline. It has been about two years overdue. Part of the problem was for the committee to come to grips with how we handle the differentiation of program to allow the flexibility for one student who starts out in a basic level to move up to a general level or even an advanced level. I do not think we have the answer yet, even though the guideline is out; it does present a problem.

If you look at OSIS very carefully, out of the 28 or 29 pages they have three paragraphs that in a general way describe the difference between basic, general and advanced. What they say there is that basic-level programs should lead students to the world of work; the general level should lead them to the world of work or to a community college, and the advanced level leads to all three options, including university.

In a lot of cases that works out very fine. I think if you keep that distinction in the back of your mind, you have certain program planning decisions that are made for you. But how do you differentiate between a general-level typing class and an advanced-level typing class? How do you differentiate between the goals of an advanced-

level grade 10 Canadian studies class and a basic-level grade 10 class? Those are decisions, and curriculum planners tend to answer those in a number of ways.

In theory, what is actually happening is that instead of having the three levels being determined by your career goals, the levels seem to be determined by the perception of student ability. Students with academic problems or students who have problems achieving certain academic standards tend to gravitate towards the basic level, whereas the academically good students tend to gravitate towards the advanced level.

Given that, you can see that there is a bit of a dichotomy then in terms of direction, in what OSIS is saying about the direction in which the program should go. There is no reason, for instance, why an academically good student could not go into a basic-level program if the basic-level program is designed to bring that student to a certain career expectation, which may be bricklaying, precision metalworking, tool and dye working or whatever it happens to be. As a result of the perception that is out there, these academically good students tend to gravitate towards the academic subjects at the advanced level.

We still have not answered the questions: How do we program when we have three levels that take students in three different directions? How do we program a particular discipline or a particular course at all three levels and expect the public to have a clear idea of what the expectations are from each one of those levels? In my mind, I still do not know what the difference is between general-level typing and advanced-level typing.

Madam Chairman: Now perhaps you understand why parents are confused. If the educators are not sure of those dividing lines, then it is even harder for us as parents.

We are technically out of time, but I know Mr. Reyecraft had a final brief question.

Mr. Reyecraft: I wanted to ask about the diploma that you recommended be issued after 14 or 16 credits. How much different is that from the provision that is already in OSIS for a certificate of education?

Mr. Payne: One of the key differences is that we would suggest that this particular diploma be mandatory. There is a very interesting line about the certificate of education in OSIS which says, "That will be granted upon request." If we researched the files in our own school board, there probably have not been many certificates of education issued.

I think the whole key to it will be the fact that we want to develop some benchmarks so that that diploma—I want to use the word “guarantees,” and it is so difficult to guarantee—they will have certain skills. To get those skills, we are going to be unphased in terms of general, basic and advanced, it is just going to be in the amount of time. In the end every student should have the same basic numeracy or literacy skills. It is the time that will be the factor, that is the difference.

I think the big difference is what the output will be, what the expectation will be. If I asked you what the expectation of people who had a certificate of education was, it would be that they have 14 courses of which eight are compulsory. That says nothing about standards, literacy or numerical standards at the end. The difference would be some kind of a standard, in my mind.

Mr. Reyecraft: How would that be assessed? How would we know whether a student met that standard? Are you suggesting some kind of testing? Certainly if we just did it on the basis of the number of credits they had achieved, and assuming they were all basic-level credits, I do not think that guarantee would apply.

Mr. Payne: One of the things I said in the initial part was that we really do not have all the answers. When we developed that idea of this basic diploma with the numeracy and literacy skills, we debated that. What is the basic literacy skill they should have? To be able to read a newspaper, which supposedly is a grade 6 reading level, or to be able to make change or whatever?

What we have to do, what the ministry would have to do is to struggle with that, to determine what a basic numeracy level is or a basic literacy level. I do not know if anybody else here wants to try to do that. That is a big decision that would have to be made. How would you arrive at it? I guess some kind of testing.

Mr. Pistor: I think the issue again—I keep harping on the program side of it, but if we had that common certificate with a common course expectation for all three levels, in other words if we could identify: “Here are the benchmarks. Here is what we would like to do,” I think it would be easier to guarantee to the public that students could do this. The testing process that is already in place is adequate.

What I mean by that is basically to use the teacher’s professional judgement which could be checked on every now and then through provincial reviews and the present Ontario assessment instrument pool model that is being used right now. But what we are saying there in terms of

that common diploma is that all students, whether they are now basic, general or advanced, would be put through a similar set of expectations for that diploma. The specialization would come beyond that.

Mrs. O’Neill: Madam Chairman, may I have a supplementary?

Madam Chairman: Not unless it is very brief. We are already behind time.

Mrs. O’Neill: It is very brief. I want to ask a specific question because I want to be able to follow this up in Hansard. You say you do not know the difference between general-level and advanced-level typing. Are you just picking that subject or are you saying that across the curriculum you cannot tell the difference between the subject areas? Certainly when you talk about this basic standard, that seems to be what you are talking about. May I clarify that for our own records, whether you are talking generally or about specific subject areas that are difficult?

Mr. Pistor: I guess what I am saying—and I used typing as a good example—is that the expectation of the ministry created by OSIS is that each and every credit may be offered at three different levels. In developing curriculum guidelines, the ministry insisted that for every credit that was offered that there would be an option in the guideline for it to be developed at three different levels.

In some subject areas, I do not want to be facetious but it is very difficult to differentiate the expectation for a student who is going out to work, as opposed to a student who is going to a community college, as opposed to a student who is going to university. It is very difficult to clearly say: “These are the differences. Here it is clear-cut. Here is what we want to do with the basic-level typing class. Here is what we want to do with the advanced-level typing class.”

It may work, but if we look at the old model, if we had a technical education and we had an academic education, I think it was much easier to differentiate. With this I am saying the idea that every credit may be offered at all three makes it very, very difficult for curriculum planners to differentiate.

1510

Madam Chairman: As I was just about to say, I would very much like to thank the staff representatives—I know I cannot call you the Windsor Board of Education—the rebel staff members who have come here today to give your presentation. I found it quite stimulating. I particularly liked the title of one of your papers,

OSIS Reform, and the subtitle, "Should We Change Paddles in Midstream?" Some people have accused us of trying to change the boat to go in a different direction. We very much enjoyed your presentation.

The next presenter is David Breznik. Would you come forward, please? Good afternoon and welcome to our committee. We have allocated one half-hour for your presentation and we hope you will leave plenty of time for questions at the end.

Mr. Breznik: Okay. The last time I appeared before a task force on education I was told 15 minutes, so I geared for that.

Mr. Keyes: You are going up in the world. Now we can question you for 15 minutes.

DAVID F. BREZNIK

Mr. Breznik: Good, it is one of my favourite topics.

When you look at the agenda here, you see all these times, all these people and names and all these certifications behind their names. When you come down to three o'clock, there is just one name there, David Breznik, and nothing behind it. You wonder who this character is and if he is even worth listening to. How did he get in here? Let me assure you that if nobody else is, I am anxious to hear what I have to say. I want to know how it comes out. I wrote this down, but I usually tend to wander a bit, so bring me back if I go off.

Madam Chairman: Okay.

Mr. Breznik: By way of introduction, let me tell you that I am a home educator and a support group leader. I am the chairman of IN FAITH, which stands for Information Network for Families Active In Teaching Homes, a Christian home-school-based organization here in Ontario. I am a former board vice-chairman of a private school and am listed in Mary Pride's book, *Who's Who in Home Schooling in North America*.

I appear before this committee today because the topic is of importance to home educators in the light of some new legislation that may be passed which would affect us. The topic I wish to speak on is grading.

What are grades? Grades are symbols used to represent achievement or progress towards achievement. A score of A would mean an outstanding achievement, the letter B would be good achievement and the letter C would be average achievement. Grades then are benchmarks towards a goal. The goal is making a child a responsible, useful and independent member of society. Grades give us an indication of how one

child compares to others in his class or age group. When that last question is answered, when all the blanks are filled in, when the final exam has been taken, we know who is outstanding, who is good, who is poor and who among us is average.

If grades are an indication of who has grasped the material and who has done well, then we should know by the end of the school years who will be successful in life. Yet it is true in my life experience, and I am sure in the experience of members of this committee, that those who finish at the top of our classes are not necessarily those who are turning the world upside down today. Many of my friends who had trouble making good grades, some who quit very early in school and others who were labelled as dropout material, are successful businessmen today and at my age could retire with a comfortable life.

Grasping the subject material and memorizing dates and places may ensure the mark of a good grade, but is it preparation for life after the school years are behind us? We do need goals and we do need to see how we and our children are progressing towards these goals, but a structure is as strong as its foundation and there are some weak points in the foundation of grading.

The first weak point is the compulsory attendance age. At the first day of school, we see groups of children coming to school. Some march right in there, anxious to learn, "Let me at it." They want to go. Others are just tied to their mother. They have their arms wrapped around her, they are crying and they do not want to go. The mother has to pry their arms off and force them into the school. It is a traumatic experience for both the parents and the children.

If you were to take three of these children, all aged six—that is why they are there—and test them, you might find that mentally and emotionally one is five, one is six and the other is seven; yet they must all start at the same time, the same chronological age. The one who is five is not ready. He does not even know why he is there. I speak from personal experience on that one, because I remember receiving the strap on the first day of school.

I did not know why I was there. I wanted to go home. I wanted to walk out of the classroom. I had no idea why I was there. There are many others like that. They do not know why they are there and they are labelled as slow learners. Not because they are incapable, they just do not understand yet. They are not ready, but that label will follow them. The one who is seven is held back. After several years, and it can happen in

grades 3 and 4, he or she starts to show signs of burnout.

I am sure that in your position on this committee, and some of you have been on boards before, you have seen studies on when children should start their formal education. There are many studies, over 50 that I am aware of. There is one from the Stanford Research Institute and another from the Hewitt-Moore Research Centre. These studies have recommended that children should start their formal education between the ages of 8 and 10. Why then did Ontario settle on the age of six and why are we trying to get kids into school even earlier for their formal education? Grading should take into account the emotional and maturity levels of individuals.

A second weakness is the size of the Ontario system. It is just too large to accommodate personalized instruction. Therefore, some are held back, some are dragged along, but all are graded. The grades will affect them for a lifetime. I have a relative who is now retired. He was very good in what he did. He was called upon as a consultant. He could do trigonometry and calculus. His math was tremendous in his head, yet he had only grade 3 and always felt that he was not fit, that he was just not up with the rest of the people, because he was labelled as having only grade 3. Grades do affect us for a lifetime.

Again, looking at the foundation, a very wise man whose writings have been studied in law schools for years said, "Those who compare themselves among themselves are not wise." To bring this saying down home, we have all heard or said, "Compared to so-and-so, I'm doing okay" or "Why can't you be like so-and-so?"

Our school system compares one to another, then we place kids at their appropriate level; but are all the factors being considered? The system bases its expectations on the goals it has set forth; but what about those who have different goals or those who have the same goal but a different method of reaching it? How does the system grade them? I am relating now to home education based on the recommendations being put forward to the ministry on how to evaluate or grade home-based education. From my four years of working with home educators in Canada and south of the border, I can see a lot of problems developing.

In our own personal school, in our home education, my goals are different. I am not comparing my children to others of their age group, but I am comparing them to an absolute standard. We do not have grades. As most

systems use a circular or spiral method of teaching curriculum, we use the linear method. As those who will be evaluating or grading our children have never been involved in home education, I am more than a little concerned about these new recommendations that will allow educators to grade our performance compared to the public system.

Each home-educating family should be looked upon individually. It should be determined what the goals of the family are, and then judgements can be made as to the progress towards these goals. Both the public system and ours require goals to work, and we both require standards along the way to evaluate progress towards our goals. But we must not label a child or a group of people through a system of grading without taking into account individual goals and emotional and maturity levels, which may mean, for instance, that no judgement should be made on a child based on his achievements prior to age 10. It would be giving every child a fresh start after the initial emotional trauma of leaving home is behind him.

We should not be comparing children to each other. We can take a child and say he is doing well compared to others in his class; however, compared to other children in Ontario or other countries, he may be doing poorly. There must be more than just academics to benchmark progress. We want our children to be useful and responsible members of society. Academics alone will not do it.

In the appendix to these notes I have given you, I have a copy of a letter from Wesley E. Cantrell. He is the chief executive officer of Harris/3M Document Products Inc. I am sure you have all heard of that company. In this letter he states, "We as a company are not as concerned with the degrees an employee has received as we are with his moral character."

There is a catch there. Here is somebody in a large corporation who is not as concerned with degrees, which are important. But there is something else that is involved, strong moral character, an absolute that we can judge children's progress on. That is something that can be judged in all provinces and all countries. It is an absolute.

1520

As a chain is as strong as its weakest link, the country is as strong as its weakest family and the family is as strong as its weakest member. You, as a committee, have the opportunity to make recommendations for Canada to become once more a strong moral country.

Individual programs, either in the home or in the school, should be evaluated by the results they produce. Will the individual be able to function independently and responsibly within society?

I conclude with appendix B which, although it is labelled a response to State of Iowa: Governor's Task Force on Home Education, I believe if you read it, it may answer some of the questions on grading that this committee is seeking to answer. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Breznik, for your presentation. I particularly appreciate the fact that you have left time for questions from members. We will start with Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Mahoney: Just a simple question. You raise a point that I think has been, in a sense, put into many presentations in the basic concept that different kids will learn different subjects at different rates at different times of their lives and will progress in different ways. But how do you identify it specifically. It is fine to say that in general terms and the philosophy of individualized education is a great philosophy, but how do you identify it? How do you tell if that five-year-old, to use your example, is not ready and the seven-year-old should be advanced when it could be reversed? It is certainly not based on the chronological age of the individuals. Do you do testing? Do you put them into a scenario for a while to see how they are doing and then take them out?

Mr. Breznik: In our family, my daughter wanted to go school around the age of four. She was anxious; she just wanted to get in there and she could not wait. With my son, we knew he was not ready. We were even concerned that at the age of six he would not be ready, but it just seemed that as he turned six he was ready to go. At five, it would have been disastrous for us to put him in there.

She went into prekindergarten; he stayed out until grade 1. It ended up when he was in the school system—they went for two years—that he was number two in his class. Unfortunately, my daughter was burned out.

Mr. Mahoney: You are giving specific examples of your family. Our mandate is to look at the public education system in a much broader scale. Who makes that decision? The parents?

You are a home educator. You keep your children and you educate them at home. I am sure there is a lot of debate we could have about the pros and cons of that, and that is not really what we are here for. I am just curious if you have any

advice for us on how you would determine it. Would you do it through the identification and placement review committee testing method they have? They also have ways of testing down at Sick Kids Hospital. Do you start standardized testing before the kid goes into kindergarten?

Mr. Breznik: That is a question I have not dealt with before. Looking at it, I would say sometimes you have to trust the parents, but there are not always parents you can trust. Some just want to get the child off to school and get rid of him. Then, again, you have to trust some of the teachers, but you have the problem of teachers wanting so many people in the classroom so they have their enrolment. It is not an easy question to answer. Sometimes it would just be obvious.

Mr. Mahoney: If it is obvious, then I guess I would agree that sometimes it would be obvious, but it seems that it is a very subjective answer.

Mr. Breznik: There are signs. I am sure that people who have taken training in this area could have signs. For instance, if a child is always getting sick or always does not want to go to school or something, you know there is something there. There is something wrong.

Mr. Mahoney: Just out of curiosity, at what age or level do you go to? How far does your home education go?

Mr. Breznik: We are planning to do it through high school, but you can do it through university if you wish. The program that we are in will take you right through if you want to be a medical doctor, a dentist or whatever.

Madam Chairman: It just occurred to me when I was listening to your presentation that many of the comments you have made about individualization of the child are actually goals and part of the philosophy of the public education system today. This is part of the whole controversy surrounding grade promotion, that our current system is working such that one is not promoting a child based on a mastery of skills but basically on a social promotion and that the individual children are getting, hopefully, the remedial help they need to bring them up as they go along. It just seemed to me that there was not a great deal of difference in the actual philosophy of the individual child between the home schools and the public system.

Mr. Breznik: What I was saying for the public system is, "Don't start them so early." You can have a place where they go for basic things. Kindergarten, I think, is just a lot of drawing and learning numbers. But drawing is very basic. You can have that, but do not start the format; do

not force them to start reading until they are ready for it.

I have heard many examples of children who had not started reading until they were eight or nine, but within six months they were reading novels. It reminds me of—I am embarrassing my kids here, I know—when we wanted our son to take swimming lessons. We decided at what age he was going to take swimming lessons. We brought him and it was a battle. He did not want to do it. He was stubborn and so were we. We said, “You’re going to swim.” Finally, we said, “This isn’t worth it,” and we stopped.

About two years later he was at a pool and saw a lot of kids having fun. He came up to me and said, “Dad, can I jump in the deep end?” I was there, so I said, “Okay, go ahead.” Now he has never stopped. He has never looked back. He has gone through and has got a lot of certificates in swimming. He was ready. We put him in too early.

Madam Chairman: Again, to me that seems part of the prevalent notion in the public school system not to be pushing children too early. I think we have had a number of people who have appeared before us who have really related that this is what is happening in the public school system.

They are not teaching them to read at the age of four when they are in junior and senior kindergarten. They are waiting until the beginning of grade 1 and in some cases in grade 2 before the children are really ready.

Mr. Breznik: If they are, that is good because they are obviously not ready.

Madam Chairman: I just see a lot of similarities. I think perhaps the public system has changed enormously since you and I went to school. It was very rigid at the time I went to school, but it does not appear to be now. There is much more room for the individuality of the child.

We have a couple of minutes left for a final question from Mrs. O’Neill.

Mrs. O’Neill: I wanted to clarify, Mr. Breznik, whether you are the teacher in the home.

Mr. Breznik: We both are. I start off the day in the morning and I finish it up at night. My wife takes them through the day.

Mrs. O’Neill: I have only just got your brief. Are you working with the accountability that is designated in Iowa?

Mr. Breznik: No. The only reason I brought that in here was that it has some interesting comments that you could use on this committee.

Mrs. O’Neill: So you are attached to the board of education of this area by the superintendent at the present time?

Mr. Breznik: Not to my knowledge.

Mrs. O’Neill: You have no contact with any educational body at this time?

Mr. Breznik: No. We belong to the Advanced Training Institute of America. We report to them.

Mrs. O’Neill: Are you an Ontario resident?

Mr. Breznik: Yes.

Mrs. O’Neill: It is a little bit unusual.

Mr. Breznik: You’d be surprised.

Mr. Keyes: I would like to follow up on the question. Can you tell us a bit more about it. Does the Ontario-wide association have—I thought it did—some connection between the ministry and home education as a permitted way of educating children?

Mr. Breznik: The way the act states it at the moment is that children may be excused from attendance at school if they are receiving satisfactory education. The school boards have been directed to come by two or three times a year to check on us. We have had them come by once, and they have never come back. They have been satisfied. Some people have had them come back two or three times.

Mr. Keyes: But you also belong to an Ontario-wide association of home educators?

Mr. Breznik: Yes, we head it up.

Mr. Keyes: So there is such in the province?

Mr. Breznik: Yes. There are about four or five organizations which really pushed for it.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank you very much, Mr. Breznik, for a slightly different angle and perspective on education in Ontario.

Our next presentation will be by the Essex County Board of Education. Would you come forward please. I hope I am being correct in saying it is the Essex County Board of Education and not rebel staff members.

Mrs. Flood: I am Joan Flood, chairman of the board, but I have brought along a very capable director because I feel many of the questions that will be arising out of this brief certainly should be entertained by the educator. I by no means am an educator.

1530

Madam Chairman: Please be seated. Welcome to our committee this afternoon. We are pleased to be in Windsor and be getting a lot of input from the residents here and the educators.

Mrs. Flood: Thank you so much, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: We have allocated one half-hour for your presentation and we are hoping that at least half of that can be reserved for members' questions.

Mrs. Flood: Certainly.

Madam Chairman: Please begin whenever you are ready and start by identifying yourself. I think you did while you were standing, but I am not sure if electronic Hansard caught that.

ESSEX COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. Flood: I am Joan Flood, chairman of the Essex County Board of Education.

Mr. Pronger: I am Ron Pronger, director of education and secretary of the board.

Madam Chairman: Please begin whenever you are ready.

Mrs. Flood: The Essex County Board of Education commends the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for its initiative in constituting the select committee to scrutinize Ontario's education system and thanks the committee for the opportunity to effect this presentation.

We sincerely hope the hearings and briefs will enable the commissioners to clearly delineate the scope and direction that public education should take in this province and, thus, reduce the continuing disorientation and debate that have plagued the educational establishment.

This submission will address the organization of the education process relating to the topics outlined in the committee's invitation and briefly comment on other items of concern to Ontario school boards.

In the essence of time, I will not read through the whole brief but rather go to the summation and then that will leave us time for questions from you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We would appreciate that.

Mrs. Flood: The arduousness of a brief of this type is that it is extremely difficult to be succinct when the topics are so broad and to be precise within the parameters of each topic when they are inexplicably intertwined. Therefore, the following summary represents a generalization of the contents in the brief, without due regard to ranking and/or interrelationships.

The Ministry of Education must attempt to clarify the educational goals of this province in terms of education's commitment to each of academics and socialization.

The balance expected between education and training must be clearly delineated.

Consideration should be given either to lengthening the schoolday or year or providing students with more time on task within the current framework.

Full semestering should be avoided until further research clarifies the import of current achievement studies.

The ministry should continue to support the current organization at the secondary school level, while encouraging the reduction and gradual elimination of streaming of nonexceptional students at the elementary level coincident with practical teacher training.

OSIS, although needing fine-tuning, should be retained. The schools must be given time to implement and improve the programs created as a result of OSIS.

A major emphasis must be upon teacher training, pre-service and in-service, so that teachers will be prepared to more readily meet the individual needs of students.

The capital grant plan should be amended to reflect current realities in class loadings.

Last, the ministry must make available adequate resources for regular operating expenditures and capital expenditures to enable boards to accomplish the goals agreed upon.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. When I said I was hoping there would be lots of time for questions, you somewhat caught me unawares. You might want to just highlight the four topics; I know you have a very extensive brief. If you just want to perhaps take 10 minutes and go through the highlights of the topics, we would appreciate it.

Mrs. Flood: All right, fine. Mr. Pronger?

Madam Chairman: That way your comments will be in Hansard.

Mrs. Flood: Certainly.

Mr. Pronger: The idea in keeping it brief and putting the summation at the end was primarily because we felt that you would have enough to do, as it was. I am sure you must have briefs coming out your ears at this point, but I will try very quickly to go through what we have.

The first one is goals. We very much appreciate that the development of a set of goals, either at the provincial or municipal level, is extremely difficult because of the differing ideas that people have. It may, in fact, be almost impossible to get a series of goals that everyone would agree on.

The 13 goals of education currently espoused by Ontario are most admirable, but nevertheless, statements which lack precision and definition are subject to broad interpretation. It is our concern that what is clearly needed is a definitive statement in respect to the precise role the schools must play in the lives of our young people and in society.

In recent years, we have been constantly reminded of alleged academic malaise within the system by such groups as the small business associations while, at the same time, being asked to assume a broader role and a role predominantly more social in nature through the inclusion of numerous programs such as sex education, family violence education, acquired immune deficiency syndrome education and so on.

We are concerned that the ministry has created for us a serious dichotomy. On one hand, we are constantly hearing comments about the fact that we need to provide more attention to the basics and, on the other hand, we are being told we must provide more attention to the socialization aspects. The ministry must make clear at some point whether we are a social agency or an educational institution. If we are both, then what percentage of our time should be directed to each? We believe it is grossly unfair that we are receiving bad publicity in the academic sphere when we are increasingly being asked within a schoolday, which is no longer than it was 40 years ago, and within a school year, which is no longer than it was 40 years ago, to add in the myriad things that we have listed.

We think there obviously needs to be some change if we are to improve the scope and quality of educational opportunities, but we must avoid assuming too much of the responsibility for societal changes and then responding with hastily conceived solutions. We must have goals, but they must be measurable and achievable and not generalized statements which lack practicability. The basic function of the school is to educate. To accomplish this effectively, we must establish realistic goals and objectives.

The struggle to create an excellent system of education has been long and hard. We will continue to struggle, but we must strive to ensure that we transmit clear, measurable goals and a clear picture of what we are about and, as I indicated, resolve the basic dichotomy between the social aspects of education and the academic aspects of education in a school system which is the same length in terms of day and year as it has always been.

In the area of streaming, we have basically adopted the attitude that at the elementary level there is really no place for streaming. We should, where possible, try to move the students along at a rate which is commensurate with their ability to learn.

Having said that—and I think this relates to some extent to what the previous gentleman was talking about and, I believe, Mr. Mahoney was questioning about—how to do that is extremely difficult, because we are in a mass educational business. We are not in the individual educational business. We could never hope to be in the individual educational business with the resources we have available to us. The resources will never be sufficient to provide one-on-one education, but we do believe the directions the ministry has been taking, which move towards a more individualized education for students at the elementary level, are most appropriate.

We must provide adequate training for our teachers to be able to do that. Teacher training has not changed significantly in this province for a long, long time and it has not kept up with the research in education today. Of course, I think it is fair to say that most education has not kept up with the research about how children learn today. As I have facetiously said, one of the major problems we have in education today is we continue to change it while it runs. It is much like changing the assembly line at Chrysler while it continues to run. It is never very effective.

At the secondary level, we support the current system of streaming, although to be very honest with you, Mrs. Flood and I were talking about this in the car and we do differ on that issue. I do not think our differences are very great, because we can really support Mr. Radwanski's suggestion that, at grades 9 and 10 at least, at the early levels of secondary education, streaming is not all that important.

Students are certainly different, particularly the modified basic students who, because of intellectual ability, obviously need differential programming and would not be successful in classes with advanced-level and general-level students, from our observation. I think the studies done at Queen's University by Dr. King support that. There is sufficient research to suggest that they would not be successful if they were grouped with students, particularly advanced-level students.

1540

Grade promotion was an area that we addressed. It is an area that gives us a great deal of concern. We are very concerned about it, and of

course much of what happens in education is grade-oriented. Grades become the be-all and end-all, and of course that is not why we are there. The current orientation, we feel, must be moved away from grades for the sake of grades and then grades reflect basically what children are learning and should not become a deterrent to success. Grades become, in many cases, a very negative component for children and do not enhance their ability to learn. Many of the dropouts which we face in our secondary programs have resulted from many years of children not succeeding, and grades are a major problem.

It is not uncommon for students to react, whenever a teacher gives a test—the first question that comes out of their mouths is, “Does this count?” If it counts, an orientation occurs different from that if it does not count. We have put too much emphasis on grades. In many cases grades do not reflect very much, because a grade may reflect 20 per cent of the course being tested and so, if you get 50 per cent on 20 per cent, in effect, your grade reflects 10 per cent.

Again, there is a tremendous body of research relating to this, in Canada, the United States and across the world, but most of it has been totally ignored in our development of curriculum in this province in terms of documents and evaluation.

As we indicated in our summation, we suggest that you take a very good look at semestering. Semestering, for the most part, from the research we have been able to find, is done not because it tends to benefit students but because it tends to benefit school systems. There is sufficient research to suggest that at least 10 to 15 per cent of the course content is not covered in semestered situations, as opposed to the regular situation.

That evaluation is about 50 per cent of the evaluation in the regular situation. In fact, provinces that moved into semestering, like British Columbia, are now moving away from it for those very reasons, and we would urge this province to move away from it too. It is not conducive, especially in areas which require a continuum, like languages, music, typing, shorthand. Many of those subject areas require a continual education. You may have as many as 12 to 14 months in between and students are, in effect, starting over.

We in our county do not have any semestering and will not be moving towards semestering unless we have to, to compete with our coterminous board which does, and that is a terrible reason for doing anything. But student loss may cause us to move in that direction. We

urge you not to support semestering in its current form.

There may be ways of dealing with semestering where you would semester only at the grades 11 and 12 levels or at the Ontario academic course level, which I would support. But again, semestering must also be done in conjunction with the universities and community colleges to which those students feed, because the timelines have to be synonymous or it is not a viable entity.

Right now we do not do it in our system and are not inclined to do it except that we may have to move that way to compete. That is the worst reason for doing anything and one which I find very distasteful personally.

Mr. Keyes: It is called the domino effect.

Mr. Pronger: Right.

In regard to OSIS, basically what we have said in our brief is that we support OSIS. Do not change it again; we are just working our way through this one. That is one of the biggest problems, that we change too frequently.

We did suggest in OSIS some adjustment in the courses. We suggested 14 credits and you notice two of those are computer literacy and personal life management employment skills, which we think are vitally important. Even if you are going to work at McDonald's, they do most of their work on computers, so you must have some computer literacy; that is not to denigrate McDonald's, because my daughter works there.

We took French out of the list. We felt it was not appropriate to have one credit of French in secondary school. To get a graduation certificate, many students in our modified basic programs have to take a course in French and in most cases it is inappropriate for them. If students really want languages, they will take them. Offering one credit at secondary is inappropriate from our point of view.

The other thing we mentioned was length of the school day and year. If you are going to insist on education continuing to become a social agency and carry many of the social programs, the school day has not increased in aeons. Maybe it has to be looked at, as does the year. I do not know how you deal with that in terms of the teachers' federations, but we will leave that to you people to worry about.

Madam Chairman: Thanks.

Mr. Pronger: You are welcome.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: We will pass it on to the boards.

Mr. Pronger: I know you will. You are very good at doing that. You make the stones and we

have to figure out what to do with them. There is certainly sufficient evidence in the world to suggest that the length of the school day in this province is not appropriate.

The other point, though, is the amount of time on task. There is sufficient research to suggest that the more time students are on tasks the better they will learn, but that relates to the goals. What is that task that you want us to do? If it is strictly education, if it is the basics, then give us the time to be on task with that within the current day and we can do it, but do not ask us to become the social agency for Ontario as well as the educational agency. Whenever there is a new program, it is the schools that are asked to undertake that.

In regard to the capital grant plan, what we are saying to you there is that it is really inappropriate. The ministry is suggesting to us that grades 1 and 2 have 20 students in each class by 1990, yet when we approach the ministry and say, "We don't have any more space"—our board, for example, has had to add 14 portables this year just to be operational and we are still overcrowded and using libraries for classroom spaces—the ministry says to us, "Put 20 students in grades 1 and 2" or "This year, put 24.6."

That is all well and good, but when we go to the ministry and say we need more funding to do construction, we need more funding to get portable classrooms, do not use the old figures that are 10 and 15 years old in arriving at the capital grants because it is not logical. That is what we are saying there. I think I have gone far enough.

Mr. Jackson: I do not think you have.

Mr. Pronger: I could talk all day on every one of these topics but that is not what we are here for. We only have half an hour and I know you have questions.

Madam Chairman: I know a number of the things you have said we have heard from other sectors of the academic world. Certainly we have heard a lot of things about the school trying to be all things to all people. This is the third presentation today, if I am not mistaken, which has mentioned the length of the school day. That is another consideration we have to be starting to look at.

We will go to the questions now. We have only 10 minutes. **Mr. Jackson,** **Mr. Johnston** and **Mr. Mahoney.** Perhaps members could keep their preambles relatively brief.

Mr. Jackson: I cannot clear my throat in 10 minutes.

Mr. Mahoney: We noticed.

Mr. Jackson: Ron and Joan, thank you; it was an excellent brief. I particularly appreciate your treatment of semestering because it is an area that concerned me as a trustee and now as a legislator. Could you fill in a little more? You do not have semestered schools. What about your coterminous separate board?

Mr. Pronger: Yes, they do.

Mr. Jackson: All of them or do they have a mixture?

Mr. Pronger: They only have one high school at the moment. They have two which only go to grade 10; I am sure they will have semestering at those eventually but right now they only have it at the one.

Mr. Jackson: Could you send a copy of the report you refer to, the 18-page report? How long ago was that done?

Mr. Pronger: A year ago.

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Mr. Jackson: Could you send a copy to our committee? I am very anxious to have a look at that in detail, although I appreciate that you have three pages in which you highlight it. I appreciate that because we are picking some themes. Your reference to Alan King was clear; we have received that information from several people. Even Fiona Nelson indicated that we have to be careful that we do not implement these so-called reforms without real academic reasons.

Within your report, do you have any information analysis on achievement levels? As you do not have semestered schools, how do you measure them?

Mr. Pronger: We make reference to it from the research we have been able to find. As I indicated, the evidence is that anywhere between 10 to 15 per cent of the course content is not covered in semestering situations. That has obviously got to have some effect over five years of high schooling, or four years or whatever number the children take. If you move that along over that period of time, obviously, they are not getting the same amount of content; therefore, achievement has to be affected to some extent.

Mr. Jackson: Can you clarify if you are referring to course content or amount of time spent?

Mr. Pronger: Course content.

Mr. Jackson: Because I have heard of cases with 15 per cent less time in semestered.

Mr. Pronger: There is evidence of that.

Mr. Jackson: Yes. We are doing some monitoring of that in my jurisdiction to show a comparison between semestered and nonsemestered in terms of actual hours of class time. It just sort of happened and evolved and nobody has bothered to stop and calculate it.

Mr. Pronger: Precisely. We did find that very same thing.

Mr. Jackson: I am not surprised to hear your reference to the outside competition, the luring of students to assist them that semestering offers, and the fact that you may be required to respond to that in spite of your best educational judgement. How soon might that occur and how prevalent a motivator is it?

Mr. Pronger: It will occur almost immediately, unfortunately. We probably will move to semestering by next year because we feel we must to retain the enrolment in our system. We are losing too many.

Mr. Jackson: Will you do it in the configuration we are hearing: stabilized, nonsemestered grades 9 and 10, and then—

Mr. Pronger: It will be some configuration less than grade 9 through OAC, probably at the senior division.

Mr. Jackson: Are you also looking at the fact that you have within OSIS the opportunity to enforce certain programs so that you are taking English over a full year, getting two semesters of English back to back, or in that context?

Mr. Pronger: We may even move to having some credits nonsemestered in the same year as some others are. For example, you could semester history and geography and not semester French because of the nature of the particular subject and so on. Where history and geography are conceptual in nature in terms of the subject, the others, I think, need a continuum. We may even do that: just semester partial.

Mrs. Flood: If I could just add something here, I think the problem we are having with semestering with our coterminous board is that now with OSIS and the 30 credits they require, going into the fifth year students may require only three credits to finish the program and rather than spend the whole year with the public system, they go over to the coterminous board where they can get it in half a year. That is the problem we are having.

Mr. Jackson: That is the problem we are having within a school board, and it seems to be the world's worst reason.

Mr. Pronger: That was my comment. We do not, as a school board, believe in semestering, but we are being forced into it because of others.

Mr. Jackson: You repeated it four times for the record, and I appreciate it.

Mr. Pronger: Five times is better than four.

Mr. Jackson: Your answers have been succinct and brief, and it is appreciated.

With the regular monitoring of achievement levels, how would you feel if this government, through the Ministry of Education, started doing achievement analysis comparisons within boards? I know traditionally we are nervous about making that information public, but you make the point about monitoring achievement levels and then the challenge of reverting back. We also know that is impossible. Once a student has seen Yonge Street, you never get him back to the farm. I have never heard of a case of going from semestering back to nonsemestering.

Mr. Pronger: British Columbia is doing it.

Mr. Jackson: They are doing it on a whole system-wide basis, so the focus is provincial intervention. The focus is not—

Mr. Pronger: In answer to your question, though, I am not sure that would prove significant, because what does 75 mean between one board and another? In fact, what does 75 mean between one school and another? Unless you gave every student in the province the same test, asking school board X how its children were doing on OAC physics as opposed to those in another board might not get you results that were valid in any event.

Mr. Jackson: I came from a system where we had 13 high schools and two vocational schools. We were able to do measurement, but we were never able to publicly disclose the analysis between schools. On a system of that size it would have been possible. We are also hearing of many boards that have a mix of semestered, nonsemestered and integrated combinations and they seem a little less reluctant to do achievement analysis. It can tell you a lot of things as well with dropout patterns and truancies. There is a whole series of analyses that could be done.

Mr. Pronger: I would not be opposed to it, but it has some flaws that would need to be addressed.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you very much.

Mr. Pronger: You are welcome.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Jackson. I always enjoy giving instructions to the members about time just to see how far they go in ignoring my instructions. We now have one and a half minutes left for Mr. Johnston and Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: To the ends of the earth, is the answer, and back.

A couple of comments, if I might, and then a couple of questions. First, I do get confused sometimes when I hear from educators that they are confused about whether or not they have a social or an educational role. I believe you have both. It is true it is a changing role and there are increasing social responsibilities, but it has been ever thus and it is just evolutionary.

Mr. Pronger: We do not argue that point. We just want clarification.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I do not blame you at all in terms of supports, etc.

In terms of the French option, I am a little confused by your comments about that. How do you get kids to take French if you do not give it some sort of a position to say, "Take it," then somebody might like it and then want to proceed on with it? To knock it out totally might just end it entirely, would it not?

Mr. Pronger: In our system, they have taken French for 10 years. They even start it in junior kindergarten. So they have had 10 years of French, and if they are not motivated it was our feeling that they would not be motivated to continue.

Your point is well made, but the concern we had was that with the way the legislation is currently written, or OSIS is currently written, the students in the modified basic programs have to have it to get a graduation credit. You are giving a French course there in which any relationship to French as it might be presented in the advanced course is not even remotely the same. We feel that was not the real intent.

What you are saying is that the real intent of the legislation was to give them the one credit so they would continue, but of course you could offer that single credit in grade 12. Nothing says it has to be at the grade 9 level per se. There are all kinds of ways to get around where you would put it. We do not feel it is necessary; if we do a good job in elementary, they will be motivated to carry on with it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The last question I have has to do with two comments. One is your number 7 on page 8 and the other is your number 5 on page 22 of your summation, which I would link together. Point 7 is "to continue to support a broad range of programs and courses at the basic level for students identified as exceptional by an identification and placement review committee," and your comment on page 22 is, "The ministry should continue to support the current organization at the secondary school level while encour-

aging the reduction and gradual elimination of streaming of nonexceptional students."

Mr. Pronger: "At the elementary level." You have to read farther: "At the elementary level."

Mr. R. F. Johnston: "Coincident with practical teacher training."

My question is—it is one of those things—it seems to me in the first one you are suggesting that almost automatically exceptional students should be provided a basic-level program at the secondary level, which concerns me. The other seems to suggest that you do not adhere to the notion of mainstreaming exceptional students. Am I wrong about that or am I reading that incorrectly?

Mr. Pronger: We do not adhere to mainstreaming, yes; we do not adhere to mainstreaming in our system.

Mr. Keyes: Just to follow up, how do you implement Bill 82?

Mr. Pronger: Under Bill 82, each board is mandated to deliver special education in the way it sees fit. There is no mandate in Bill 82 that tells a board how it must do it. We do not believe in mainstreaming, but we do offer special classes for students who are identified as learning disabled or trainable mentally retarded. We provide as much in regular class program for as many students as we can.

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Mrs. Flood: Also, there are no special grants for mainstreaming.

Madam Chairman: A final question by Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Mahoney: Given that we could likely agree that anyone would likely learn better in a system that he was enjoying—the concept of school being enjoyable so that the kids are going to do better—and given that you recognize that you may have to go to some form of semestering because of the competition of your coterminous board, it would then seem to follow that the students who are transferring are doing so because they prefer the semestering. I guess my question is very simple. Does that tell you something?

Mr. Pronger: No. I disagree with your premise. As the chairman said, many of them are doing it because they have three credits left and they can finish at the end of January. They can either go on to university or get employment for eight or nine months prior to entering university in September. That is the only reason most of them go.

Mr. Mahoney: It is a timing function.

Mr. Pronger: Timing is the key issue. In fact, many of them have apologized to us for leaving. They say, "But I am going because...."

Mr. Mahoney: I have talked to a number of high school students. The message I am getting in my community is that they substantially prefer the semestering. In fact, they find the traditional organization—now it may be different in your area; I am not disputing that, but my experience has been that semestering is preferred by the students.

Mr. Pronger: My comment would be that is probably relatively accurate, but the reason the students prefer it are not sound educational reasons.

Mr. Mahoney: Because it is easier?

Mr. Pronger: It is easier. However, I had many students say to me: "Boy, semestering is great until you get a teacher who is not very good and then you have to spend an hour and 20 minutes a day with that person. It gets pretty tough."

Mr. Mahoney: Yes.

Mr. Pronger: I do not think those decisions are made on a sound educational basis.

Mr. Mahoney: There are some people who feel a teacher has to be part entertainer to get through that period.

Mr. Pronger: I would agree.

Mr. Mahoney: I am not sure that is what they are there for.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I had to put up with some of those people for five years.

Mrs. Flood: I think it is a very long time for the student to have to sit and pay attention.

Mr. Pronger: It is too long.

Mrs. Flood: It is difficult for all of us even as adults to do that.

Mr. Mahoney: I am finding that more and more, actually.

Mr. Pronger: I think that is why the course content is declining. The teacher cannot maintain two 40-minute periods in 80 minutes. They cannot teach the same length of time. They run out of steam.

Mr. Mahoney: Perhaps I could very briefly go back to your second recommendation and item in your summation. I am curious. You say the balance between education and training must be clearly defined. Are you talking about a specific age or time in the educational system when that would occur?

Mr. Pronger: One, we have determined, of course, that education and training are not synonymous.

Mr. Mahoney: I understand.

Mr. Pronger: Basically, we are looking at secondary education in that respect.

Mr. Mahoney: Does this tie into the issue of streaming, that perhaps we should not be streaming until at least grade 11 and at that point you decide whether or not they should be going into a training program versus an educational program.

Mr. Pronger: Yes.

Mr. Mahoney: Good. Thanks very much.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Essex County Board of Education for a very stimulating half-hour and for its contribution to our committee today. Just as a note of interest as you leave, Mr. Mahoney's constituents are not that far from mine. He is Mississauga and I am Metro Toronto, but I am getting very mixed reactions about semestering and much of it is negative.

Mr. Pronger: Glad to hear it.

Madam Chairman: Just to show it is happening all over.

Mr. Pronger: We will send the committee a copy of the total brief we did on semestering.

Mrs. Flood: Just as a comment, I think the students have to really rely on the educators and their judgement for their betterment.

Madam Chairman: Sometimes the parents too.

Mrs. Flood: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Our next presentation is by Norma Coleman and Michelle Friesen. Perhaps you could come forward, please.

I understand there is a slide presentation, so we are going to adjust our committee structure somewhat. Perhaps while one of you is setting up the slides, the other person could turn on the microphone and introduce yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard and perhaps start the preamble for your brief.

NORMA COLEMAN
MICHELLE FRIESEN

Mrs. Coleman: I am Norma Coleman and this is Michelle Friesen. We are the parents of children with exceptional needs. We would probably be the parents of children who would be classed as the very hard to serve. We both sit on a number of committees in the community planning groups for integration into preschools and into the school setting. We sit on a number of

parent support groups, so we talk to parents on a regular basis about all sorts of needs, and education is just one of them.

"The school is society's instrument for preparing children for full participation in the community." We believe this statement, made by Her Honour, Judge Rosalie Abella, to be true. If at a very early age we begin the process of segregating certain children due to physical or mental disabilities, we end the possibility for full participation. A segregated child becomes a segregated adult.

It is our belief as the parents of children with exceptional needs that our children have the right to live, make friends and be educated in their own community alongside their peers. We strongly believe that the education system is the perfect place to begin this process of full participation, and to this end we would like to address the issue of mainstreaming with this committee.

We have a vision for our children, much like the one you probably have for yours, that they be accepted for who they are, for their strengths and their limitations and that they not be denied any opportunity our society affords. We see our children as just that, children. They are not blind children. They are not deaf children. They are not multiply disabled children. They are simply children. In her royal commission report, Judge Abella further states:

"Children who are disabled suffer tremendous disadvantages at the hands of the school system, partly because there is no consensus whether separate facilities or integration into the public school system serves them better....

"Wherever possible, the disabled child should learn alongside children who are not disabled...It may involve extra tutoring, the use of an attendant, or specially designed programs to supplement the classroom instruction.

"From the earliest age, disabled children should see themselves as part of the mainstream of society, and children who are not disabled should see them the same way. These enabling perceptions, carried into adulthood, have the power to affect, on both sides, expectations about the extent to which the community is and should be accessible."

We cannot imagine any instance where it would be a benefit to segregate a child for his or her own good, or indeed any situation that would make it desirable to exclude any child from participating in the life of his community.

The principle of segregating students with exceptional needs is endorsed, and in fact encouraged, by the ministry in the Education

Act. For example, section 72 states, "Every board...shall establish and maintain a school or class for such trainable retarded pupils." Section 72 does not encourage school boards to develop programs based on individual pupil needs, but rather provides them with legislated authority to develop programs in self-contained classrooms or segregated schools. In both circumstances, children are isolated from their typical peers and in most cases must travel outside their home community.

Regulation 262, section 35, reinforces the practice of isolation by labelling and actually defining how many children can be congregated in a self-contained class. As well, the act describes an exceptional pupil as "a pupil whose behaviour, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he is considered to need placement in a special education program."

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The current policy of bringing children to existing programs that are based more on labels and less on individual needs must be discontinued. The implementation of a policy that would bring an individualized program to the child in the setting he lives in would be far superior.

The use of labels leads to stereotypes, prejudice and systematic discrimination. Research literature and documented scientific studies prove that labels can be harmful, self-fulfilling prophecies. Labels, such as "multiply handicapped," "educable retarded," "trainable retarded" and "learning disabled," assume that individuals can be meaningfully classified into distinct groups.

Labels only serve to enforce the development of negative attitudes, not only for the individual who is labelled, but also how they are perceived by their peers. If we work from the premise that all children are exceptional and their individual needs may vary at any given point in time, we remove the necessity for negative labelling and promote an educational system encouraging growth and development based on an individual's needs and strengths.

Imagine a school system where all members of the school community are responsible for teaching children with a full range of special needs, a system where no formal testing and labelling is done, but where all assessments are done to define needs and then to develop appropriate programs. Imagine a system where all children are educated together with appropriate supplementary supports and services as required.

Imagine a system where all children have the chance to become just one of the kids.

The weaknesses inherent in the present system have been recognized by some school boards in Ontario and these boards have taken a leadership role in their community by implementing integration very successfully. Boards such as the Essex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and the Roman Catholic separate school boards in Wellington county and in Hamilton-Wentworth, to name just three, have demonstrated that students with very exceptional needs can be successfully educated in regular, age-appropriate classes with appropriate supports. The question for these boards was not if this was the right thing to do, but rather, "How do we make it work?"

The Essex county separate board in stating its philosophy wrote: "Provision of such service will dictate that we discontinue our current practice of bringing children to programs and implement a practice of bringing the program to the child in the setting he lives in for more than his school day. We must recognize that a child's home school represents a large part of his total community and it is there that he grows as a 'whole' person and may better recognize his worth to his community."

The needs-based program of the Wellington county board is one that accepts that each student is exceptional. The program's goal is to respond to the identified needs of any child and to the identified needs of any classroom teacher in respect to a child's need.

The key factors in making this needs-based philosophy work are consultation and co-operation. It must be a co-operative effort involving parents, school boards, principals, general and resource teachers and community support services. The process that most parents find intimidating and confrontational, the identification and placement review committee, is no longer used as an instrument to identify for the purpose of labelling a child and then, once labelled, determine which placement the child fits into.

Most parents attend the IPRC hearing thinking they are going to have a discussion with professionals about the needs of their child and the development of a program to meet those needs, only to find, once there, that the decisions regarding their child have already been made and that there is little room for discussion and little chance for satisfaction through appeals.

When placement is not the issue, the review committee's role becomes a more positive one. It

becomes a forum where individuals who know the child share information with new individuals becoming involved. The committee would include parents, principal, classroom teacher, consultants and teacher's aide if appropriate. The discussion now centres around the strengths of the child, the anticipated goals and the resources necessary to develop a program.

The benefits to the pupil with exceptional needs and those associated with him in this educational model are numerous. For the student, it provides the opportunity to develop friendships with typical peers and an environment for learning social skills through interaction with typical peers in meaningful contexts. The student with challenging needs has the opportunity to learn by observing typical peer role models and has the chance to develop a sense of self-esteem and of belonging to the community.

The reverse benefits are just as important. Most people feel uncomfortable and self-conscious around those with disabilities. The disability becomes the focus rather than the person behind that disability. We believe that through contact with individuals with challenging needs, this self-conscious and uncomfortable behaviour diminishes. When the contact becomes part of daily living, these tendencies can disappear completely.

The promise that educating all children together holds is that children can learn to accept each other's humanness. Friendships and relationships can develop, knowing that each of us is similar, yet unique. We begin to move in the direction we believe society wishes to go, a community based on acceptance, tolerance and full and equal participation by all. We suggest to you that the benefits of such a system not only flow to the students but to society as a whole. We applaud those boards across the province which have adopted the philosophy and are now educating all children together. It is a goal for the whole education system to strive for.

However, what has developed as a result is an unbalanced system. Some children are presented the opportunity for an education with their peers at their neighbourhood school, while others are denied it. Two children with exceptional needs living on the same street may not have access to the same type of education.

If you are fortunate enough to be associated with a board which has adopted the needs-based program, you may only have to go around the corner to school. If however, your board lives strictly within the current legislation, you may be bused daily miles from your home to attend a

class of children with varying needs and of varying ages.

The question arises as to whose responsibility is it to bring the system together and ensure access to all children. The answer is quite clear. The responsibility lies with the Ministry of Education. The time has come for the ministry to take a leadership role in developing a policy and appropriate legislation enabling boards to implement a system based on need rather than labels. In line with society's move to deinstitutionalize, it is time for the ministry to acknowledge that segregated classes and schools have many of the negative traits of institutional settings. Therefore, the ministry must move to design a system of education that provides the opportunities and supports that promote the participation of all persons in the mainstream of society.

The main focus of education legislation should be the needs of the individual. Legislation must guarantee the right to be educated in one's home community alongside age-appropriate peers, regardless of exceptionality. It must ensure that necessary supports be provided to students with challenging needs in regular classes as required to meet the individual's program goals. The act must also acknowledge the advantages that come with full participation in the community and at school for everyone.

As well, the act must ensure fair and just avenues of recourse for inappropriate individual programs that would protect the rights of the child. The practice of labelling individuals by exceptionality for determining placement in programs should be disallowed.

Special education in Ontario has come a long way in the last 20 years. Everyone, regardless of exceptionality, is guaranteed universal access to a publicly funded education. However, the time has come to go beyond just guaranteeing an education. It is time to challenge the traditional educational wisdom that children with exceptional needs require special teachers in special classes. The Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board perhaps says it best, "Each belongs."

The Ministry of Education can take a leadership role by providing the legislative framework to make this dream a reality. Education is not simply a matter of dollars and cents, but rather a matter of philosophy that will determine our future. We have within our system excellent models of needs-based education. If this model can work successfully in some communities and in certain schools, then logic requires us to ask

why it cannot succeed for all students in all schools.

Madam Chairman: I understand that you have a slide presentation with approximately 15 minutes left. I wonder whether you want to do the slide presentation before you open to questions.

Mrs. Coleman: It will just take five minutes.

Madam Chairman: Certainly; go ahead.

1620

Mrs. Friesen: Should I raise it higher or can everybody see that? Good? These are a few slides we have put together from children in three different school boards across Ontario, children with varying needs.

This is Jonathan. He is celebrating his sixth birthday with his kindergarten classmates in these slides. He is waiting patiently as the teacher prepares the cake. Then he spent the next few minutes delivering cake back and forth to his friends. It was an excellent way to teach him about sharing and learning social skills at the same time. Jonathan spends all his time with his classmates.

This is Diane. She is a four-year-old with multiple challenges. She is in an early childhood program. That is her teacher leaning over to encourage her to finger-paint. She also has an educational assistant to help her with her physical needs. That is her assistant there. She participates with everyone in circle for reading time—there is her class—but as well, she is on her own sometimes for sort of an individualized program. This is her physiotherapy session. She cannot walk, so in order to learn to walk, she has to climb up the bookshelves. Then she walks down the bookshelves as a classmate pulls or pushes a toy in front of her.

In this classroom there is a child who is hearing-impaired, and the whole class is learning sign language. This is Daniella, the child who is now signing a message to her class. That is a grade 4 class.

This is Stephanie. Stephanie is getting ready to go to school. She is starting at a new school in this picture. Prior to this, she was bused 45 minutes from her home. Now her mother walks her five minutes down the street in her wheelchair. When she first started at the school, there was not a lot of eye contact with the children. You can see her positioning is astray on the bolster. But as time went on, she developed a relationship with her teacher and smiled and looked at the children and the teachers around her.

We like this slide because in this case we feel accessibility really is a state of mind. That is a janitor and a parent helping her up and down the stairs to the stage. Teamwork really is the key when it comes to educating all our kids.

That is Stephanie in grade 1 with her school T-shirt on. I think you can notice how much the expression on her face has changed from the first few slides. She has lots of friends in the community and is sitting even better than she was earlier.

This is Brandy. Brandy was in grade 4 in this picture. She is now in grade 6. She participates with the rest of her classmates by pointing out words that they have to read. She practises her writing and a gross motor program with her class. She does need assistance from a resource teacher and spends some of her time in a resource room as well. This is she and some of her friends, who are all in Girl Guides together. That is Brandy in the resource room.

This is Lisa. When Lisa first started kindergarten, she spent a lot of her time with an assistant holding her and assisting her in actions and songs. As the kids got to know her, and it did not take long, they started to be her hands and her eyes, pushing her wheelchair in gym class, painting or feeling her name card during attendance. Now the children work the actions with the songs in circle and sit with her. The assistant has backed right off.

This is a library picture. Earlier on, the assistant was holding her in the library. Now one of the kids is supporting her shoulders. She was in kindergarten at this time and is now in grade 2. Her program is individualized and tailored to her needs. Although she spends all the time in the class, her program is different from that of the rest of her classmates.

Whether it is Jonathan sharing or Diane learning to walk or Lisa getting tickled by her teacher, a lot of wonderful things happen to the children—all the children, not just the children with special needs in these classes—and each child has an individual program.

Tanya does all of her work with the grade 1 class and does not require any special assistance at this time and 11-year-old Josie, who is at this time in grade 6, spends much of her day with her classmates and part of the time in a resource room.

This student, who has also been labelled trainably mentally retarded, is integrated in her grade 6 class.

This is Carla. She stands up to my waist at this time and is in grade 8. She follows a completely

individualized program but never leaves the room and enjoys afterschool activities and things with her peers.

This is Brandy, again, getting outside support in the resource room.

This kind of education makes families feel whole and makes communities feel whole. I think Stephanie and her best pal would agree.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, We will now open it up for questions from the members.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have known both these people before through other circumstances, Norma being in a strange office at Queen's Park for a while with Mr. Peterson or something—I always forget the name—and Michelle having some nefarious connections with people in our party at that time. It was not only when I was the social affairs critic for the NDP that I ran into a lot of the problems families were having with resources for their own kids at home, let alone in the education system, so I am delighted they are here, especially following the last presentation, because I think it is really important to know what the situation here is.

Although you listed the boards that do provide mainstream, perhaps you could tell us a little bit about the experience of people with kids with exceptionality in this area in terms of the Windsor boards and the Essex county public board.

Mrs. Friesen: As you can imagine, when parents with kids who have challenging needs get together, we do not get together based on what school board everybody belongs to; so we do speak to and are with parents from all four school boards.

I guess people are feeling at times frustrated because the four boards do deliver services differently to each other and those parents who would really like to have the opportunity for their children to be with their neighbourhood peers have found, because of the legislation and the way school boards design their plans, they are unable to really obtain that for their kids if the school boards decide to educate kids in self-contained classrooms aside from their peers.

We have found in some instances that some of the parents have actually gone as far as using legal loopholes or other loopholes to switch their taxes in a case where one board is and another is not providing that kind of service, whether they out and out lie or buy property and rent to another family of another faith. I think the frustrations run so deep that parents do look to any kind of avenue to try to get this education for their kids.

We would not want to say that everybody is unhappy. There are parents, especially those parents of older children, who are quite pleased with the education their kids have always had. We just feel very strongly about it with what we know and with the research that is out there and the perception that regular children have of kids who are set aside in a special class down the hall. We just know too much nowadays not to make changes, especially for the younger children.

In this community, there are a lot of different services being delivered to the kids, or a lot of different educational packages, and there is a lot of frustration.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We were often given the argument in the past that kids with less exceptional exceptionalities, let me put it that way—less multiply disabled than some of the kids you were showing us—are mainstreamable but for kids with multiple disability, really it is for their own good that they should be kept separate. I would like you to respond to that, plus the notion that you almost alluded to there, actually, which comes up, that for the very young, maybe in day care or in areas where we are not getting too academically oriented, this is appropriate but once it gets to be an older child, the by-age peer group is not as essential. I wonder if you could comment about those two perceptions.

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Mrs. Friesen: If I did lead you to believe it was only appropriate at a younger age, I did not mean it. What I am saying is we can leave those parents alone whose kids are older and happy, but let's start with the younger ones. It has been shown in Kitchener-Waterloo, Hamilton and Guelph that as teenagers it becomes even more important to have those peers and that the teenagers are more than open to be involved with, help and be part of those kids' education. We have examples of kids who are severely handicapped involved and doing wonderfully, fully mainstreamed in high schools. If I led you to believe that, it was not my intent.

Mrs. Coleman, do you want to respond to Richard?

Mrs. Coleman: My daughter is not in the school system as yet. She is still in preschool, but she will be entering the school system next year. This is sort of a preparation on her behalf.

We have worked very hard in this community and in others to have our children at a very early age go into regular preschools. Except for one setting here which has four children left, most children are integrated into a regular preschool setting. We have worked very hard to have the

supports necessary to make that happen. It works very well.

I can only tell you that before she went, there was very little going on. Now that she has been there and the children are involved, she gets to be part of that whole group. The children at first were very apprehensive and stayed away. They had a lot of questions. We answered those questions as best we could. Now when new children come into the setting and come up to Catherine, which is her name, and say, "Catherine can't speak; why can't Catherine talk?" I do not answer the questions and her intervener does not answer the questions. It is the other children who answer the questions for her. They say: "Catherine can talk. Catherine talks with her hands." Children are just marvellous and they learn from each other. I do not want that to stop for her when she reaches public school.

I do not want to be the one who has to tell the child, "Because you're different, it's necessary for you to be taken away from your friends and go into this class." Children are very accepting of each other. We sometimes get arguments that they will be made fun of and they will not be able to handle it. But regular kids are made fun of. I would probably handle it very much the same way as I would handle another child who would come home and say, "The kids make fun of me because I'm fat" or "because I wear glasses," or something.

You have to answer those questions no matter where you are. It is part of life and I do not think we shelter our children from life. If they have to live, they live in their community and part of that is going to school. We cannot educate them in unreal classrooms and expect them to transfer that to the real world. It is much better for them to learn how to do things as part of their community rather than as part of some segregated setting.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank you very much for coming before us today. We have had quite a few presentations, actually, from parents of exceptional children. We have had the Alliance for Children—Ontario and the Down syndrome people. We had a presentation, actually, in Sudbury where the gentleman had very similar comments to make about the identification and placement review committees that you made today. In fact, he thought it should be renamed to "identification placement program and review committee" so parents could participate in forming the program for the child and be far more active in deciding where the child was going to be best served.

I think your slides today have been the icing on the cake, if I could just use that phrase. You have really brought home to us how children can fit into the congregated situation and thrive. Thank you very much.

Our next presentation will be a joint one by the Third World Resource Centre of Windsor and the Teachers' Committee for Human Rights. Perhaps you could come forward, please, and take a seat at the front table.

While you are being seated, I will just mention to the members that we owe a debt of gratitude to the group because its original brief had been couriered to Queen's Park and got lost somewhere in the bowels of Queen's Park. As members trying to stay found in the bowels of Queen's Park, we know how easily that can happen. Thank you very much for providing additional copies for us.

We have allocated half an hour for your presentation. We hope you will allow perhaps half of that for questions from the members. So please begin when you wish and just start by identifying yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard.

TEACHERS' HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE THIRD WORLD RESOURCE CENTRE OF WINDSOR

Mr. McAllister: I am James McAllister. I am the chairperson of the Teachers' Human Rights Committee. On my left is Donna Crowell, who is also a member of the Teachers' Human Rights Committee and also a board member of the Third World Resource Centre. To her left is George Crowell of the University of Windsor. He has been a member of the Third World Resource Centre.

I would just like to say that our presentation is made on behalf of the Teachers' Human Rights Committee and the Third World Resource Centre only.

Mrs. Crowell: We wish to address you on behalf of the Teachers' Human Rights Committee and also on behalf of the Third World Resource Centre of Windsor.

The Third World Resource Centre is a community-based learner centre through which groups and organizations are concerned with the development education network. By the term "development education" as used in this brief we mean analyses of issues of human rights, peace and justice, the environment, underdevelopment in the Third World and Canada's international role.

The Third World Resource Centre receives the support of the Canadian International Development Agency and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship for its educational endeavours.

Mr. McAllister: The Teachers' Human Rights Committee serves as a co-ordinating link between the Third World Resource Centre and the Windsor-Essex county school community. The work of this committee has received official recognition by the local board of education. The Teachers' Human Rights Committee is a voluntary association of teachers from the Windsor and Essex County schools. We promote educational opportunities for youth in development education.

Mrs. Crowell: As educators, we are in accord with the goals of education as stated in the OSIS document. Our brief focuses on those goals specifically aimed towards the development of responsible and concerned citizenship.

We are disturbed that students in our high schools may receive an Ontario secondary school diploma without ever having had the opportunity to learn about and reflect on critical world issues. How can we develop concerned citizens if we, as teachers, do not share with our students the concerns of the global human family?

We have in mind the huge disparities between rich and poor in both developed and underdeveloped countries, the underdevelopment which reflects the economic and political relationship between rich and poor countries, the damage to our environment often related to modern technologies, political systems that are an outright attack on the human rights values the world community has struggled to establish and the burgeoning militarism in our societies which exacerbates conditions of poverty and increases human rights violations.

Mr. McAllister: The parliamentary task force on north-south relations encourages us to ask boldly that "the challenge of international co-operation must enter our everyday concerns" as educators, and that our students "must be persuaded that our efforts in development co-operation can be effective in accomplishing the goals which Canadians support—improving the lives of the poorest people. And they must have the opportunity to see and hear, [and] to participate personally." This is from the Parliamentary Task Force on North-South Relations, 1980.

Education is needed that informs and offers opportunity for critical thinking and for deliberation on decision-making towards choices for active involvement. Our students need to see the

relevance of these problems in their own lives. Education should also demonstrate that actions by groups or individuals do make a difference and can promote change.

If our students are to become responsible citizens, they need the example of present and past struggles for justice and of people and movements that have transformed society for the better. Even where present human rights concerns would most easily and likely be part of credit courses, we find them sadly lacking. It is dismaying to note, for example, how many of our students are unaware of the recent struggles of the civil rights movement in the United States and of the work and life of Martin Luther King, Jr.

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An obligatory component of Canadian history should include the struggles of working peoples in Canada to ensure social legislation that protects workers, their families, their environment and their rights to decent income, working conditions, health care, pensions and aid in situations of crisis.

It is interesting to note that many of our students take part in extracurricular organizations such as United Nations clubs in order to engage in discussions on current events and possible responses. These students willingly spend their after-school hours with teachers committed to reflecting and discussing with them the meaning and significance of issues for the wider community. For these activities, there is no credit in our present system.

Some of our students are expressing a felt need for reflection and communication on the plight of the Third World, the toxins in our environment, the threat of nuclear war and alternative directions for a safe and just future for the human community.

Dr. Crowell: The spirit of youth is generosity and idealism: The young aspire to find that which is worth spending a lifetime doing. Their self esteem depends to a large extent on our recognition of their gifts and our communication with them on how they can contribute to a world in need. We must not let fear of bias keep us from establishing a structure in which this kind of education is possible. We cannot allow ourselves to think that our current curriculum is free of bias. We ask that the Ministry of Education prepare careful guidelines to ensure that such essential education no longer be neglected in our high schools.

In *Sharing our Future*, 1987, the Canadian International Development Agency has formu-

lated a policy to co-operate with provincial education authorities to encourage the integration of global development issues into existing curriculum guidelines and to promote efforts to support the in-service and pre-service professional development of teachers to assist them in teaching global issues. "By encouraging the full participation of the formal educational sector, in conformity with provincial jurisdiction over education, CIDA can help to sensitize young Canadians to global challenges."

Mr. McAllister: We submit the following recommendations:

1. An essential component of all ministry guidelines should be development education.

It is perhaps easiest to see how development education can be an essential component in social science courses. Science guidelines can easily and should include environmental issues and their international character. We also claim that development education can be part of art, music and language courses, as all these draw on cultural aesthetic experiences. Our students will benefit from the opportunity of experiencing a splendid variety of cultural expression. An emphasis on multicultural approaches to learning will help students appreciate our Canadian diversity and contribute to respect for others, which is essential for a peaceful society.

Dr. Crowell: 2. Faculties of education should offer courses in development education.

Teachers who have had some experience in social analysis will be able to help students think critically on current events. In teaching training, time should be given to allow prospective teachers to inform themselves on critical social issues and to establish principles for a methodology of engaging students in like pursuits. Teachers will be able to explore possibilities for integrating development education while adhering to guidelines established for the curriculum.

Mr. McAllister: 3. A compulsory credit course should be offered in our high schools, including components on human rights, peace and justice, environmental issues and development education.

Development education links the common interests and concerns of communities in Canada and the Third World. More than details of misery and injustice, development education must provide the relevance of Third World conditions for the lives of Canadians. Some of the issues through which connections between Canada and the Third World can be made are food and hunger, appropriate technology, human rights,

health care and the effect of militarization on development.

Dr. Crowell: 4. We recommend that the Ministry of Education mandate adequate personnel, courses of study and audio-visual resources.

Resources in development education are available through the Development Education Centre in Toronto and through community-based learner centres, as in our Third World Resource Centre. None the less, without a mandate to teach critical social issues, many of these resources never reach the classrooms. Until such a mandate comes from the Ministry of Education, school boards will continue to ignore the need for consultants, courses and audio-visual resources that are necessary to facilitate development education.

Mr. McAllister: 5. Professional development for teachers on critical social issues is essential.

Many teachers have expressed a need for information on development education. Some have formed voluntary organizations such as ours, the Teachers' Human Rights Committee of Windsor, to support one another in development education research, planning, sharing of resources and providing special programs for students.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I wonder if I could just get a better idea of who you are, what teachers are involved. Is it all boards in the county area? Just a little bit of that sort of information.

Mr. McAllister: The Teachers' Human Rights Committee of Windsor—it is actually of Essex county—includes schools or teachers from all boards, including the Mennonite school in Leamington and virtually every high school in the county, separate and public. We receive support for the activities we sponsor from all boards.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Is there any province-wide linkage of groups like yours?

Mr. McAllister: None that I know of.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just know of one within the Catholic communities, the Teachers for Social Action. I do not think there is an equivalent province-wide for all boards. It strikes me sometimes, as somebody who has been involved in these kinds of issues for a long time and looks forward to these kinds of changes, that the great irony is that the mission of the Catholic system allows some of the progressive Catholic boards and schools within those boards to do a great deal along the lines you are talking about and in a cross-curriculum fashion to bring in issues of social justice on a regular basis,

whereas our public boards and teachers who are in the public boards find it very difficult to do so because of a fear of the notion of bias being brought in rather than focusing on the questions that are involved.

Is that your experience in this area generally, or has your board been pretty good about it?

Mr. McAllister: Our board has been fairly receptive to the sorts of things we have put forth. Every year we sponsor a conference dealing with a particular world issue such as hunger in the Third World or disarmament. We have about 300 to 400 area students attend the day-long conference. In February 1989 we are sponsoring a day-long conference on the environment. We do it through the Third World Resource Centre. There is a fee for service that the boards pay it for the materials and the people we invite into the schools.

Mrs. Crowell: I would also like to respond to what you said. I taught Catholic high school for six years. The social justice program is taught to the grade 13s, which means that quite a few of the students who do not go beyond grade 12 simply do not receive anything in this area.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It generally depends on the board. There are places like Welland where 1,800 kids every year in Notre Dame College participate in a special day's event and work in soup kitchens or whatever it might be during their school year as part of their course work. As I say, it depends on the board, but that is the only area I have seen to really develop it well.

Just one last thing. A group this morning—I cannot remember which at the moment; I do remember I am in Windsor, though, which is an important step—suggested that perhaps the issues you are talking about should not be developed in terms of a new mandated course, because of all the difficulties that are already there in terms of the demand for core subjects and all that kind of thing and the lack of options; but rather that we should perhaps be looking at rethinking our notions of what are subjects of study, that we are very much still dealing in 19th-century concepts of what is a course.

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The kinds of concerns that you are talking about can be dealt with across a broad range of issues. If you were dealing with the social sciences, clearly there are a number of things within the political and economic ranges that could be brought into a course of that sort, including mathematics and other kinds of things. But we tend to have very linear concepts for

divine and old-fashioned ways, and maybe what we have to think about are new ways of more holistically looking at our courses.

It seems to me that you do not have a hope in hell—if you will pardon the expression—of getting in another mandated core course, especially on a controversial issue; but if we had a different way of thinking about how we are teaching at the secondary level, much more like we are already doing at the elementary level, these kinds of issues could be more easily incorporated.

I wonder if I could just have a reaction from you to that.

Mrs. Crowell: I have two reactions. One is that if you just say this has to be part of all education—teachers should deal with current events and teachers should deal with these kinds of issues—if it is within their courses of study that is a help, but it can tend to get ignored; whereas it would be ideal to get a mandated course. If you have a mandated course, you have people who have to get skilled in this and people who will find resources and money will be set aside and all the rest of it; so a course is kind of an ideal.

On the other hand, development education should fit into many of the courses being taught. Unless you can get it mandated from the ministry in some way, it is not apt to be done if it is just left to—"Well, incorporate it." It will not be done.

There has to be some kind of mandate so that teachers can know it is okay to talk about critical social issues and get kids thinking. Teachers have to know it is okay. Teachers also need experts to turn to and they need resources if they are going to deal with these things. Unless school boards have it mandated to them, they are not going to put out the money to put in a consultant, say, of development education. I have never heard of one; is there one in the province? I have been trying to tell my school board for 12 years, "Why don't we have someone who is a consultant in development education?" Why do we not have that?

Mr. Jackson: I probably have a lot of questions and a lot of comments I would like to make. I find the brief interesting. I can only underscore some of the points you have raised, and I will use, by way of example, the necessity of dealing with an issue. Global disarmament is an issue which I support; I have found myself in league with Mr. Johnston on several occasions on that subject.

On the other side of the coin, I was disappointed with the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario and some of the material that it recommended as a guideline for teaching. I

was put in an awkward position to speak out against some elements.

However, in fairness, you have indicated that it should be well researched and should not be subjected to a certain degree of bias so that it is, in fact, presented in a very balanced and comprehensive fashion. You may wish to refer to the FWTAO matter. We are still waiting for the ministry to publish some guidelines so that we can get on with peace studies in a general vein. I certainly applaud it and hope that we would move beyond the method we are currently using, which are United Nations clubs and other vehicles.

The second point I wanted to make has to do with some very positive signs we are seeing today. You have to look for them carefully, but even today we saw from the Waterloo County Board of Education a request that the goals of education be expanded to include the notion that the individual should learn how to live in harmony with others. Of course, that is the way to bring in the curriculum redirection which you are proposing.

If time had permitted, I wanted to ask some questions to amplify that, but I see now it is more appropriate to raise it with you to see if you concur as to whether we can at least make that commitment, because it has to do with our interrelationship with gender and society, our interrelationship with the environment and our interrelationship with animals, to show us how we allow ourselves to stage our dehumanization and so on.

As a third element, I would like you to comment on this package of progress that is slow. When we were in Sudbury, we talked to a school board that is now engaging in more specialization, in terms of whole schools. I notice that in my own jurisdiction we have a school that is very much committed to this curriculum you have proposed. It is a very exciting program, but it is the only school.

In Sudbury, they are talking about designating a specific high school as an environmental high school which will develop many of the curriculum objectives. Sudbury is considered partially a labour town. I asked in detail, "Are you talking about labour studies, the whole spectrum of the environment and interrelationships?" They indicated that was going to be the goal for the specific school. It seems that we have certain vehicles, but we are not co-ordinating them.

I guess the point which Mr. Keyes put off the record but I will put on the record is that we have many requests to crowd the curriculum with one more mandatory credit. Someone once said we

are now up to 42 mandatory credits if we listen to everybody. Perhaps you might talk to us about some more innovative ways you may have heard of through your networking around the province in terms of getting the agenda across.

Finally, Professor, if I can mention this, today at noon I was speaking to some students at your university and I found out to my disappointment that there is a whole series of programs in the business program at the University of Windsor where it is put at the bottom, "Chrysler employees get preferential access." I did not know this was going on, but just as an example, the labour studies program has a codicil that Chrysler employees get first crack at it. Students who would like access to them cannot get into these courses.

I have raised a lot of issues but I have all my points across. Perhaps you would like to comment on any of those that I have raised. I was disappointed to hear that.

Mrs. Crowell: I am not a member of the women teachers' federation, so I am not too familiar with what it produced. I did notice last January that they put out in their publication a very good teaching resource on peace education, which I thought was wonderful. I am familiar with the Canadian Teachers' Federation statement in which it proposes, with support, the teaching of peace and peace studies. There is a Canadian Teachers' Federation policy on the teaching of peace. That is worth reading.

I would like to see something in the goals of education which would further what you said about the goals of education, which would further developmental education. I am not sure the way it was worded by the other groups necessarily lends itself to the international kinds of concerns. If we were to say "developing harmony," some could interpret that as maybe courses in psychology which help you relate as a person with others. Do you know what I am saying? It does not really come to an international kind of understanding, which is what we are after, so I think it would have to be worded fairly carefully. It would be very nice to have that. That is what I would like to respond to at this moment.

Dr. Crowell: I would like to comment. I do not know about this course you spoke about. I will check up on it and see if I can find out more about it. What I would like to say is that I teach a number of courses that deal with the range of social problems discussed in this brief. I have students who are largely ignorant of many of the issues that I raise and are surprised by the information that they get in the course.

There should not be any students in the university who do not know what the comprehensive test ban is and what effect it would have as a step towards disarmament. They should know that Canada has been supporting the comprehensive test ban since the 1950s. There should not be students who do not know that people are hungry in the world, not because there is too little food and too many people, but because people are deprived of resources that enable them either to grow their own food or to buy it. There should not be students who are unaware of the destruction of our rain forests and so on.

We live in a time when we have the most dangerous problems that have ever threatened the human future and our dominant institutions are not giving us resources to respond to those problems. They are not responding adequately to them. We need students who are informed about these issues and who are motivated to innovate to deal with these problems. Students need to catch a vision so that they might find meaningful vocations in working to overcome some of these problems.

Even though there may not be jobs out there already to enable them to deal with these problems, it seems to me there are all sorts of possibilities for them to create jobs. In our vocational counselling, we ought to be encouraging the kinds of innovative energies in our students that would enable them to have fulfilling work at the same time they are meeting problems the rest of us are very inadequately dealing with.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is also scary to think that 65 per cent of our kids never get to a post-secondary institution and therefore never have a chance to get that kind of a grounding to then try to make decisions, as citizens, around all those political matters, whether they are local, provincial, federal or international. It is frightening when you think how complicated life is getting.

Madam Chairman: On behalf of the select committee, I would like to thank—I had better look at this to make sure I get the long title right—the Third World Resource Centre and the Teachers' Committee for Human Rights for your contribution to our committee today.

This winds up the committee hearings in Windsor. We have been very pleased to be here and get input from the residents and from the educators in Windsor as to the topics we have been discussing.

I would remind members of the steering committee that they are to meet immediately in the lobby. The clerk will be arranging transporta-

tion to the airport for our meeting. For the balance of the committee, if other members would go to the lobby within the near future, Pat Girouard will be arranging transportation.

The select committee on education stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning in Toronto.

The committee adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

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Individual Presentations:

Meyer, Dr. John R., Faculty of Education, University of Windsor
 Fraser, Bonnie, Maths Teacher, John L. Forster Secondary School, Windsor
 Kraus, Michael, Vice-Principal, Kingsville District High School, Kingsville

From the Windsor Home and School Council:

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 Saffran, Mike, Superintendent of Operations
 Payne, Stephen, Superintendent of Program
 Cheswick, Jack, Superintendent of Instruction
 Pistor, Val, Co-ordinator, Curriculum Implementation

Individual Presentation:

Breznik, David F., Chairman, Information Network for Families Active in Teaching Homes

From the Essex County Board of Education:

Flood, Joan, Chairman
 Pronger, Ron C., Director of Education and Secretary

Individual Presentations:

Coleman, Norma
 Friesen, Michelle

From the Teachers' Human Rights Committee and the Third World Resource Centre of Windsor:

Crowell, Donna
 McAllister, Jim
 Crowell, Dr. George, Professor of Ethics, University of Windsor





No. E-21

Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Organization of the Education Process

First Session, 34th Parliament

Tuesday, September 27, 1988



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, September 27, 1988

The committee met at 10:08 a.m. in committee room 1.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

The Vice-Chairman: I call the committee to order. The chairman expects to be a little bit late, but she will be with us this morning.

Our first presentation is from the Union of Ontario Indians. Making the presentation will be Grand Council Chief Joe Miskokomon. Joe, I want to welcome you to the committee. It is not the first time we have faced each other at the opposite ends of an accommodation, but in the past it has been at opposite ends of the arena when we were both protected by face masks and a number of bodies in between.

Good to see you, and welcome to the committee. I encourage you to go ahead and make your presentation. Our practice has been to try to keep presentations down to about 15 minutes so that members will have an opportunity to ask questions after the presentation has been made.

UNION OF ONTARIO INDIANS

Chief Miskokomon: Thank you. I hope this reception is not as cold as it was when we used to play in Glencoe arena.

The Vice-Chairman: It was always pretty hot at my end.

Chief Miskokomon: I would like to introduce my colleagues with me. To my left is Lewis Debassige, who is education adviser to the West Bay band of the tribe of the Ojibway people. To my right is Dr. Ron Common, faculty of education, Brock University. He comes from Brampton and he is a want-to-be tribe member.

We wish to thank the select committee for this opportunity to present a summary of our views on the critical issues confronting the education of Indian students in Ontario today. My remarks are distilled from four very traceable and harsh facts.

First, education for first nations in Ontario has historically served to remove us, our language, culture and even our children. Second, the experiences that students have had at high school are different between native and non-native students. Third, the opportunity to correct this

disadvantaged relationship has never been within the proximity of our influence and we have been accepted as mere purchasers of education services. Fourth, we have come to admit that our exclusion and the vague, inattentive, inappropriate policies have resulted in native language and culture loss and the alienation of our children.

We have heard presentations to this committee that have reported that a high student dropout rate exists in this province, as well as evidence of a lack of success of many students. Much more shocking statistics are revealed when one segregates students' achievement data by ethnic groups. Throughout this province we have a situation in which native students drop out at a rate that exceeds 55 per cent in southern Ontario and 85 per cent in northern Ontario. The few students who do manage to graduate graduate from the basic or general programs.

Our research explorations have shown that native students' placement in the provincial high schools varies from 32 per cent to 55 per cent of all native students placed in the basic program, with a high of 11 per cent of native students even placed in the advanced stream.

As a result, we have an annual phenomenon of virtually no grade 13 native graduates in Ontario. In one specific example, two separate studies, Common's of 1988 and King's of 1980, reveal that in one provincial high school with 35 per cent of the student population being native, approximately 200 native students a year, there was only one grade 13 native student who graduated in a six-year period.

Our data are clear. If a native student is an average student, he or she will be placed in or end up in either a basic- or a general-level program. Further, a native student currently is predisposed by birth to fail in the current high school system. These trends are unacceptable to the first nations people. Based on these facts, we hope to lay before you with some clarity what we consider to be inappropriate features of policies like OSIS, semestering and streaming.

The letter of invitation to this hearing clearly defined your purpose as reviewing the "education philosophy of Ontario and the fundamental goals as they relate to equal life chances and full development of each student." It further targets the area to be addressed as "the organization of

education process relating to streaming, grade promotion, semestering and OSIS."

This presentation marks our native students as examples of how the current education system in Ontario has failed to yield "equal-like chances and the full development of each student." It also finds fault in the current policies and specifically requests change in some of those items which we feel prevent our students from attaining a better outcome in school.

The Ontario Ministry of Education is to be commended for its efforts to improve the quality and relevance of education for our native students. We welcome efforts like the development of the People of Native Ancestry, better known as PONA, and the implementation of native as a second language. However, we feel that the designated purpose of these developments was greatly lessened by administrative mechanisms like OSIS, streaming and semestering.

As an example, in the Native Education: Provincial Review Report, 1984, the importance of native language programs is recognized. The trend is clear: native youth in Canada and Ontario are dropping regular usage of the language at an alarming rate. This is a growing national tragedy. Similarly, sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 of OSIS suggests that the ministry is concerned for our native students. Yet at no point does the ministry require any school board to adjust the curriculum to meet the specific needs of native students.

Without specific direction from the ministry, we are of the opinion that the provincial schools will continue to focus their attention and interests on non-native majorities. This is not a condemnation of the school boards. Instead it is a perception of the current educational situation in northern Ontario.

With concerns for rising taxes, special education and declining enrolment, the present school boards are unable politically and/or financially to implement suggestions of the ministry. Therefore, for the benefit of the students, the Ministry of Education is respectfully asked to revise certain sections of OSIS as they relate to native students.

The current French requirement holds little value for our native students. Although OSIS permits the selection of French at any level of difficulty, small secondary schools, which the majority of native students attend, are unable to provide such options. Due to timetabling limitations, the advanced students will frequently be unable to take a general- or basic-level course.

Consequently, our students may frequently be forced to enrol in the advanced level and face the increasing likelihood of missing that credit. Further, since the graduation requirements for the Ontario secondary school diploma are more demanding than in previous requirements—30 as compared to 27 credits—our students who are unsuccessful in French may have to invest another year or semester to complete their course of studies.

We feel that such a development will be followed by an increase in the dropout rate. Moreover, unlike the non-Indian majority, our students in all likelihood will not take more than the one compulsory French credit. Their ability to speak, read or write French will disappear by the time they finish secondary school. This, we feel, is not the best utilization of the students' time and effort.

For the majority of Ontario students, the current policy of two substitutions with a compulsory section may be fair. For native students, however, a large number of parents will advise their students to use one substitution for French. Consequently, they will have only one substitution left for the remaining years of secondary school while the majority of students have two. Native students will therefore not have the same flexibility as their non-Indian counterparts.

The problem of inflexibility or limited choice for native students is further compounded by the semestering system. In the few small secondary schools where native language is offered, it is frequently scheduled opposite a compulsory credit and because of timetable demands or student numbers, such an elective course may be offered once or twice in the first semester and not at all in the next few semesters. A language not taught or practised in a 12-month period is unlikely to be retained. These limiting factors may even result in the worst possible situation of utilizing both substitutes in the first year of school.

At present, native language and native studies are optional and considered nonguideline courses under section 6.9, while French is a compulsory guideline course. If fairness is the objective of the ministry, then it is reasonable to contend that native language should enjoy equal status with French, which would engender greater interest, use of and pride in the native language by native students.

In the provincial review report, pages 18 and 19, the ministry has articulated the significance of native languages and native studies but this

importance is not reflected in any meaningful way in OSIS. By complementing the above recommendation the ministry will demonstrate its real commitment to our efforts to renew our language and culture.

The ministry is further requested to develop the necessary regulations to ensure that local school boards will offer native language and native studies credit courses. I would suggest, to go even further, that they be compulsory courses.

If native students have the option of substituting a native language or native studies course for French, it is imperative that such courses exist. Past experience has shown that positive suggestions by the ministry seldom result in meaningful changes which favour native students. To ensure that these changes do take place, the ministry must increase the clarity of policies like OSIS in terms of implementation specifics, and further make commitment by way of financing, research, development, curricular and services support.

Reorganization of the school year into semesters has produced mixed results for our students. For poor attenders, typically those in the basic and general streams, semesterizing does not seem to work. Their frequent absences result in their quickly falling behind in class work and in an increased failure rate. While advanced students seem to profit from the concentrated study over a shorter period of time, paradoxically the semester system for all levels seems to help students who are prone to dropping out to accumulate partial credits each year. We do not know what the answer is, but it does appear to be an area requiring further investigation.

In summary, we would like to make the following recommendations:

1. In order for the education system to more meaningfully meet the needs of native students, the current legislation must be changed to permit greater native representation on school boards in a proportion equal to native student enrolment. We have situations in Ontario where 80 per cent of the students in the system are native and there is only one appointed native trustee out of a total of 12 trustees.

2. That native language or native studies may be substituted by native students for any compulsory credit without the loss of substitute allocations according to OSIS. Students should not be penalized in terms of a loss of flexibility of programming for their wish for cultural and linguistic renewal.

3. Efforts must be made to find alternatives to existing vocational academic counselling which occurs, as the students are often in inappropriate programs and not interested in high school or post-secondary education.

4. We wish to see the elimination of basic, general and advanced streaming which results in our students being phased out of the academic streams into programs in which counterproductive low expectations are held for them.

5. Finally, that the Ministry of Education provide financial resources to first nations' educational interests for the research and development of culturally appropriate material and culturally relevant education structures. Locally controlled native school systems with native administrators, native teachers and native students should not be forced to merely duplicate the system of the dominant culture. Currently, these systems are small and do not enjoy the economy of scale of research operations that large public boards experience.

As an authority on education in Ontario, it is incumbent upon the ministry that the interests of the native students are promoted. If changes are not forthcoming, the problems identified within the provincial review will persist and become more serious.

We can no longer afford to invest in questionable education which has proved to be too costly in terms of lost opportunity and unrealized potentials. Changes to this miseducation system with less than immediate results will mean the commitment of our youth to alienation, unemployment, welfare and other social disorders. This we simply cannot accept. Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you, Joe, for the presentation. We have about 15 minutes left for questions, and I will start with Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you, Joe, for a really good brief. Can I ask you—it reads with such common sense—if this was primarily derived from looking at the one or two studies which exist, the King study, etc., and then just your own anecdotal experience; or have you, as an organization, been able to do any follow-up study to support many of the things which jump off the page at me as being logical? I am just wondering if you have had any chance to do your own research on the problems you have identified coming out of the King report, etc.

Chief Miskokomon: There have been a number of research studies done and we quote two within this. However, there was a major study done nationally by the Assembly of First

Nations and in that process, all first nations across Canada were invited to attend and make presentation.

There were a number of models looked at in terms of alternative educational systems; there was examination primarily of the federal system; there was examination of Indian controlled and operated schools on reserve and native controlled and operated schools off reserve; one that exists within the city of Toronto was examined. Basically, whether or not it can be academically defended in terms of strict theory, we have come to the conclusion—and I think this concurs with the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development—that the system which is currently in place does not adequately address the educational requirements of native students.

We have found there is a higher success rate where native people or Indian people have taken that educational program and designed it and built it in with the same academic standards and quality of education required to meet standards within the provincial systems. We have found that as we have taken over our own systems, the rate of dropout has been lessened to some degree.

One of the basic problems, I suppose, is what I mentioned in the brief as economy of scale. It is difficult for us to do the appropriate cultural curriculum development, the policy design and so on, which big school boards have built in. We become the purchasers of that from, let's say, the Middlesex County Board of Education within southern Ontario. In fact, we put money into someone else's system for their design, yet when it comes down to commitments or statements made by the Ministry of Education about the appropriateness of Indian culture being taught there, it is a hell of a job to negotiate those things out of the school board. We run into a lot of that type of problem in educational institutions.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I thought your comments around the problems of the small school with a specific native population were very useful for us. I am also glad you raised the school board representation as your first summary recommendation, which is something we tried to address a bit this spring in a temporary way, but unfortunately were not able to. I hope the government moves quickly to accept the principle you are talking about or at least to increase the maximum of two that is there presently under legislation. That just seems ludicrous in any sense of accountability.

I think Cam Jackson will be delighted with your comments about the whole question of semestering. You are giving him some extra

ammunition there. I thought your points about the frequent absences and falling behind in schoolwork were very germane and very practical kinds of concerns.

I also think we are going to have to look at this question about French-language or native-language priority in native schools. I think that is a very important thing for us to try to deal with as a committee and I thank you for raising that.

I have one question you did not address in the language question, and that is using Ojibway, Iroquois or whatever it might be as a language of instruction. You did not talk about the importance of being able to use that as a model in some of the schools in the province. I wonder if you would maybe make some comments about that and the difficulties of trying to do something like that under OSIS at the moment.

Chief Miskokomon: The problem that creates to a large extent is that coming back and looking towards qualifying native teachers—I think we have to start with that problem, with the whole certification process of native teachers, especially in the instructional language of Ojibway or the given tongue in that area. We have a difficult time because many of our people who have been fluent within the language itself did not have the academic capability to meet the standards set forth for certification of teachers. We have had difficulty doing that.

We come to, I guess, a break of philosophy with regard to the capability of another government to license our own people in our own language. It does not seem realistic to us, if in fact we are going to put in native teachers who are going to teach language, that we have to come forward to the provincial government and meet its academic expectations of us. Not academic in terms of all the other academic requirements required; we do not have a problem there. It is, who within the Ministry of Education at this time can certify native language? The answer is no one.

How do we then get certification? There is a whole way of doing it and I understand that, having been in teachers' college myself once, but coming to the final end, who actually tests whether that person is qualified? We feel the province does not have the capability to do that. We do not disagree that there should be native language instructional programs and so on. It comes to the question of certification. Dr. Common may want to comment.

Dr. Common: I just want to pick up on your point, which is valid. In band-operated school systems throughout this province, there are

numerous band-operated schools that run Ojibway immersion classes, just like French immersion classes, and these students finish up with six years ultimately in an Ojibway immersion setting. Then they go to junior highs or secondary schools where there are no Ojibway speakers because there are no Indian teachers.

It is a catch-22. There are no grade 13 Indian graduates, so conversely we are not getting professional native teachers. We have repeatedly run into this problem that the Ministry of Education is quite well-meaning. It came up with a native-as-a-second-language curriculum for the secondary schools. They are relying on good, well-meaning boards of education to hire Indian teachers to teach that language. We are running into continual conflict around this province where boards are not well-meaning. They do not have Indian teachers on staff, so they say: "We have to hire a \$30,000 or \$40,000 teacher to teach native as a second language. If you want that to be the case, the first nations groups should come up with the money. We are not coming up with the money."

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Our position is that if those board had been reasonable in hiring native teachers in the first place, to teach science, social studies and all the other programs, it would not be costing them a cent to run native-language programs over and above that. Currently, the boards are not funded or resourced for this native-language instruction. Although it is a ministry policy, it is not so in schools when we want it to be.

Mr. Debassige: I would like to make a further comment on that. One of the problems that is becoming very obvious in Ontario is that although some boards are well-meaning and try their best to retain native teachers to teach in the schools that are well-attended by native students, there is a problem that is coming to the forefront. When those same teachers were employed by a band-operated school or the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, they were enjoying an income that was tax-free. When they step off the reserve to teach in school boards, their income becomes taxable.

We have suggested to some boards to try some very innovative ways of exchanging services without the boards issuing payment year-round. That fact alone makes the decision for native teachers looking for jobs more difficult. They are unwilling to teach off the reserve. Their preference is to teach in a reserve situation. Perhaps personnel leasing would be the answer, or a co-operative. Of course, we have to contend with

the union. That is another row we have to contend with.

Manitoulin enjoys a good number of very qualified professionals. As a matter of fact, that was the origin of the design of PONA 1. We are fortunate, and now we even have our teachers moving into high school level, regardless of the financial cost to them in terms of taxed income.

Mr. Adams: Chief, I was very shocked by your statistics and the dropout figures. One of the reasons I was shocked is that they presumably reflect very badly on this province, because I understand there are now 39 university native studies programs in the country. In nine of those, I believe, you can get a full degree, and of course, in Saskatchewan there is Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, which is a full native university now. I understand there are about 8,000 Indian graduates in the country. I know that more than half of the native people of the country are in Ontario, so therefore I would have expected us at least to have had our share of those.

We certainly have our share of the native studies programs. Where are the students for these native studies programs in the universities coming from, if they are not coming from Ontario?

Chief Miskokomon: The statistics that we quote, first of all, come from Indian Affairs statistics. Because of the amount of the tuition agreements and how they are set up between local school boards and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, we have a very accurate count and we are able to log and watch students as they progress or drop out through the system. Those statistics are accurate to that extent.

In the matter of native studies programs and the number of graduates, there has been, of course, to a large extent, a bigger push towards emphasis of education in the last 15 or 20 years. We believe very strongly that education is a cornerstone towards self-government and that we have to move people through the system in order to be able to take over self-government when that time comes. Where the students are coming from are students who are getting through the system, thank goodness to say. They are going into those streams within those universities.

Of course, Indian education is a very profitable and lucrative business for county school boards to be in. In past years, they have been able to capitalize their own structures within Ontario without costing the local taxpayer anything. They have been able to increase the size of

programming that has been offered in both technical wings and in terms of recreational capabilities. I know in some instances where pools have been built on the Indian population within schools.

We do not enjoy the same type of equity when that master tuition or tuition agreement comes out. We are caught in the position of constantly having to purchase that service. I think we have made considerable strides within the past 20 or 30 years in terms of education and being able to get people through the system, although in small numbers.

What we are here attempting to say is that we see this as an interim step, because we believe very strongly in Indian control of Indian education. We do not believe that we can allow other people to look after our best interests. It is up to us to do that. We believe in putting more emphasis on culture development, language development, curriculum design, policies, and in negotiating, having more people on school boards who can relate to the concerns and interests of native people. We believe that is positive and we think that should continue, but there are some fundamental things within the system that do not allow our students to come through it.

Mr. Adams: As I said, I am concerned as to the extent to which it reflects on the province. Have you looked at the native-run boards in Quebec? I was wondering if you were going to say that was where the students for these college and university courses were coming from.

Dr. Common: I just want to add to the chief's comments that two weeks ago Premier Peterson attended a meeting on Manitoulin Island and presented an award to probably a typical Indian university graduate, 77-year-old Kay Assiniwe, who dropped out of junior high school 50 years ago.

Typically, if you look into those programs, you will find compensatory programs in operation for students who have dropped out of high school. Many of the students are going in as mature students, 25, 30, 35, 40 years old.

Mr. Adams: Can I just make one more point. On your point about language and certification, I agree with you. I know about the school boards in Quebec and the extent to which these students are immersed in their language, but you were saying there are not people to do this.

Given that these native studies programs exist in the universities—I know, for example, in my own riding, Algonquin 1 and Algonquin 2 and Ojibway 1 and Ojibway 2 are offered in the

university; I think at least one of those courses is a remedial course for students who have not had the opportunity at home—will those programs not be producing people who can help you certify teachers, in other words have native people certifying native teachers?

Dr. Common: Part of our problem is that those programs generally develop elementary educators also. A major obstacle we have is the talent pool for secondary teachers, as Mr. Debassige indicated. But those programs will assist us, there is no question about it. There is the language-training program at Lakehead University.

Mr. Adams: And Laurentian University and Trent University.

Dr. Common: Yes.

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Chief Miskokomon: I would just like to add a quick point to that. As you are well aware, we also have to contend with another government, and that is the federal side. Currently, within the policy development, there is no consistency between the federal side and the provincial side on programming. The current problem we are facing now on the federal side is a redrafting of the post-secondary school guidelines.

One of the things they are taking off their priority list—I am talking about the federal side—is the whole side of advancing more Indian educators. They now want to turn out more people in terms of engineering and architectural degrees; there are bursaries and there are going to be incentives developed for that. So at the very time that we require more people, not necessarily just within the elementary school system because now we have to move to the secondary school system, that type of programming is being deleted by the federal side.

Mr. Vice-Chairman: I want to get to our next presentation, but before I do, I know Mr. Villeneuve has a question he wants to ask.

Mr. Villeneuve: Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, and thank you, Chief Miskokomon for a very succinct and accurate presentation. I find it strange where you quote sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 of OSIS, saying that they are concerned about native students; however, nowhere within that requirement does the ministry outline what should be done.

I come from an area that is very close to St. Regis and I know the Akwesasne Band Council runs into basically the same problem you are outlining here. Could you help this committee by possibly suggesting just how the ministry could,

by providing some flexibility to the school board, allow you people to make concrete presentations or convey concrete requirements to the boards. I think this is what you are getting at.

I am not sure just how much the boards want to keep their autonomy, and yet you people certainly should have more to say than indeed has been the fact. I think we need help here from you people who experience it on an ongoing basis. Can we have your comments on that?

Mr. Debassige: There have been good efforts by PONA in developing native as a second language. We feel both levels of government invested good dollars to enrich the provincial system. On the other hand, there has not been equal investment in our own systems.

One of the things that has to be done by the Ontario government is to undo some of the transactions that took place before. For instance, in the development of PONA—I am not being critical of the benefits derived from it—a deal was struck between the federal government and a ministry of the Ontario government to develop the course. We were asked to the table to endorse the course after the fact. They utilized our personnel.

Deals of that type should be avoided in the future. It does no good in fostering goodwill or trust. On any development in curriculum, we would like to have good, meaningful input into it, and be credited for the development. Our staff was utilized in the development of PONA. Our staff was requested to take part in the development of native as a second language, but no credit is given to them. I think such deals have to be avoided in the future.

Second, of course, there has to be a sounder or clearer policy of giving official support to native content, assisting native students in services like actual counselling, rather than just attendance gathering or policing the kids on the school grounds. That has to be defined, either through legislation or regulations.

Mr. Villeneuve: You are looking at input prior to the formulation of even any tentative documents. You would like to see your input at the ground or grass-roots level and then come up from that with input at that point from the native people, from the school board and the ministry.

Mr. Debassige: Exactly.

Mr. Villeneuve: As opposed to coming back to you and saying, "Are you happy with this, and if you are not you still better be happy with it?" which I gather from your comments has been the case in the past.

Chief Miskokomon: I think the committee should understand that over the past few years, since the constitutional renewal has taken place in Canada and debates have gone on between aboriginal people and the governments, the first ministers of Canada, we have come to the firm belief that we are not recipients of anyone else's government. We have our own forms of government, our own forms of culture, language and so on, that have been constitutionally protected.

We do not believe that the provincial government has ultimate education authority over our people. We do not believe that the federal government, regardless of paragraph 91.24 of the Constitution Act or its legislation, has ultimate authority over us. We believe that we have authority to negotiate and come to an understanding between governments where we can coexist and survive as a culturally identified people that is recognized within the highest order of the law in the land.

That is simply what we are saying. We do not want to be recipients. We are tired of being seen as welfare recipients in our own lands. We want to be full, equal partners as we go forward in the future. If it is in education or any other field, we want to be recognized and seen within that area—not given something, but have it recognized that we hold that ability.

Mr. Villeneuve: What do you see as the role of the school board in all this?

Chief Miskokomon: The role of the school board certainly goes unchanged. We are prepared to negotiate those accommodations and those types of agreements with local school boards. We go unchanged, it is now a matter of where people sit.

I think one of the things is that if a recommendation is going to come forward from this committee, it has to be a very strong politically willed recommendation to send the words through the system that we are not prepared to be seen any longer as recipients.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you, Joe. Your advice this morning has been very clearly presented to us and thank you very much for bringing it to us.

Our next presentation is from the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians. Doug Maracle is going to be making the presentation. I would invite Mr. Maracle and his colleagues to come to the chairs before me. We would appreciate if you would begin by introducing your colleagues and then proceeding with your presentation. We have allocated a half hour for it and we would like to

have at least half of that time, 15 minutes, to allow for questioning.

ASSOCIATION OF IROQUOIS AND ALLIED INDIANS

Mr. Maracle: On my left is Gordon Chrisjohn, who is the tripartite co-ordinator of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians. Our office is based in London. On my right is Tom Dockstader, who is the executive director of the office and the association. I am Doug Maracle, elected band councillor from the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte at Tyendinaga and elected to the position of executive secretary for the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians.

The Vice-Chairman: If you would like to proceed with your presentation, I see that the chairman has returned from her meeting, so I will return the chair to her. Please proceed.

Mr. Maracle: The first nations of Canada set out their aspirations for education as far back as the Indian control of Indian education policy of 1972. It was within the context of this policy that the concept of local control became paramount. The 1983 report, *Indian Self-government in Canada*, provided both an impetus of political action for the Indian control of Indian education and a framework for its implementation, the self-governing first nation.

It is clear that past education systems and services have not been reaching the majority of first nations people. This failure to get through to our students has been attributed to a variety of potential reasons. Each of these problems required a variety of solutions. Ultimately, no solution or group of solutions was able to solve the original, fundamental problem.

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The first nations of Canada represent a rich diversity of people and cultures. We feel that those outside our culture either do not—perhaps cannot—know our needs or do not intend to meet our needs. Within past school systems, our students were homogenized and blended with other ethnic groups and all were offered essentially the same education. School systems which were not Indian controlled did not accommodate diversity.

There are fundamental questions in education for which there are simply no universal answers. Education systems begin with an education philosophy. Should education be geared to shoring up education weaknesses or developing strengths? Should education focus on fundamental needs of students or aspirations? Should education solve problems or set goals? Where

should the emphasis in education be placed? In the system where first nations have been educated, non-Indians have provided those answers.

Indian education policy is forming and solidifying rapidly. There is presently a national review of Indian education going on in Canada, being conducted by the Assembly of First Nations. The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians has had input into this review. Among the principles we advanced is the foregoing—local first nation control of education.

What may be of greater significance to you in your activities are our additional comments. We do not intend that our people be educated only in isolation from the rest of Canada. Since we must all be educated together, schools which are not Indian controlled must reflect our cultural diversities as well.

Education is the architect of society. Perceived needs become education priorities. However, the needs of self-governing first nations are not the same as the needs of the present society of Canada. First nations people have been educated for a place in the overall society to the exclusion of a place in the makeup of a self-governing first nation. While their education must, of course, serve their needs in dealing with society at large, it is more important to us that the student be prepared for the challenges of participating in and assuming a leadership role in the design and construction of a first nation.

As such, we are uneasy with the practice of streaming. It can be a grave mistake to devise a scheme for the utility of a people, to set expectations and devise education limits for that people. In the past—and yes in the present as well—Indian people have been streamed into agricultural, mechanical and vocational education. More of this sort of training is not the answer for developing first nation governments.

First nations require more than occupational skills. Primarily, we require personal development. We consider the first step in the process is the fostering of pride as Indian people. This will require a fairly comprehensive revamping of the cultural content of the provincial curriculum.

Provincial curriculum must contain native languages and cultures. For some languages, the situation is one of a crisis. Some native languages are on the verge of extinction. Public education has the resources to salvage and preserve these languages. Once gone from North America, these languages will be gone everywhere and the entire world will be poorer.

We stress that native culture in the curriculum serves a dual purpose. It will foster pride in Indian students as Indians and enhance their self-images. Moreover, we believe that native cultural curriculum components breed respect and understanding for Indians among non-Indian students. As such, it is a necessary component in schools which are non-Indian controlled and have little or no native students. Therefore, curriculum material must be reviewed for accurate and unbiased content and others developed and utilized.

You doubtless have read between the lines of what we are saying here. Rather than leave our position unclear in any way, I will state plainly that first nations people are ethnic groups—but not only ethnic groups. We have a special status within the framework of the Canadian Constitution and expect the institutions of Canada to reflect that status. When other ethnic groups unite, they form political interest groups. When we unite, we form nations.

We are sharing this country with you and wish, in future, a more mutually beneficial relationship.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Maracle. Would either Mr. Dockstader or Mr. Chrisjohn like to comment before we continue? I will open up for questions from the members.

Mr. Adams: I appreciated your stress on language. I know you are talking about the schools in particular, but you heard my line of questioning before. Is anything being done with respect to Iroquois language in the colleges and universities? I mention that only because it seems to me that is one of the ways, only one, it can feed back into the schools.

Mr. Maracle: There is an attempt to revive the native languages in universities and colleges. From my position, which I did not outline at the outset—I am also the trustee from Tyendinaga who sits on the Hastings County Board of Education—the shortfalls I see locally are the same as those Grand Chief Miskokomon outlined in the certification process of having a native-language teacher in the provincial system. That is where the biggest downfall appears to be at the present.

Mr. Adams: Could I ask you about these Quebec school boards? One of them is the Kativik school board and then there is the school board associated with the Baie James settlement; some of them I think are Indian and some are Inuit. As I understand it, one of the things they are doing because there is this catch-22 thing is to

train teaching assistants very quickly, who then teach kids in this immersion setting in the early grades. I wondered what you thought of that approach.

Mr. Maracle: In my understanding, the immersion setting is strictly a local community decision. If it is there as an immersion setting and the parents wish their students to attend that immersion setting, that is where the students will attend, but if they do not wish to attend that, they simply go the regular process.

Mr. Adams: At least one of these is a very remote area they are dealing with. You might be interested in one thing I noticed, that is, that these teaching assistants are often taking courses in college or university but their practice now is that they do not go to the campuses at all; when they receive scholarships, their scholarship money is used to bring the professors to their village to teach them rather than to take these mature students, which is in effect what they are, from the village to the campus. I do not know if you knew of that scheme.

Mr. Maracle: This is the first I have heard of that. That is something taking place in Quebec?

Mr. Adams: Yes.

Mr. Maracle: It is something I have not heard of.

Mr. Villeneuve: Thank you very much for your presentation. I believe you echoed and reinforced basically what the chief just prior to you said. Are you familiar with the travelling native college on Cornwall Island?

Mr. Maracle: Yes.

Mr. Villeneuve: Could you comment on the success of that and whether this committee can possibly learn something from what is happening there, where we have federal involvement, Ontario involvement, New York state and the province of Quebec? It happens to be situated where it touches all three areas. Would you comment on that, please? Maybe this committee can benefit from some of the things happening there.

Mr. Maracle: What I would say about the travelling college is strictly my own personal view. We do invite them to Tyendinaga at Deseronto. We have had them at the local school, but as far as being involved in the secondary system is concerned, they have not been in the secondary system to date.

Mr. Villeneuve: I believe it is basically training natives in their native arts and that type of thing and making the public aware. It is a

travelling college which I believe covers a good part of Ontario. I know the Akwesasne people do study in the city of Cornwall primarily and the buses do go to the island. I know they run into some problems, basically as you have articulated and as your predecessor has articulated. I think we need a clear statement from your band councils, from your representatives about how this committee should be addressing the problems facing you.

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I would certainly look for additional input from you people to give us guidance, because we have federal involvement, provincial involvement, school board involvement and native involvement and as you multiply the people participating you complicate things quite extensively. I certainly agree with your predecessor that you should be in on the formulation of some of the rules and regulations as opposed to coming in after the fact and giving your tentative approval.

Mr. Maracle: I guess my comment to your statement would be that in the makeup of the local county boards, the structure which has been set out allows only the provision, as Grand Chief Miskokomon mentioned, for one trustee. In too many situations, when one native person goes into a room full of non-natives and sits down at the board, right from day one there is a feeling of intimidation. In much the same way, if any one here were invited to my local band council meeting, you would suffer that same feeling but would have no problem facing a large delegation of people of your own colour.

Mr. Villeneuve: So you are in full agreement that there should be some very firm directives through OSIS, through the Ministry of Education, looking after your particular needs as native peoples?

Mr. Maracle: Needs, and I guess paying more attention to allowing some grass-roots input. There are locations where that is happening.

Mr. Villeneuve: It is your feeling that the one representative, which you happen to be, on the school board to represent your people is maybe tokenism.

Mr. Maracle: To say the least.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians for your presentation to our committee today. We appreciate the contribution. In July, we did hear from the Chiefs of Ontario and they highlighted a number of the difficulties native students are

encountering in the education system. I think today we have had some of the meat put on that so that we understand the issue a little more. Thank you very much.

Our next presentation will be the Ontario Principals' Association. Members have the brief before them. In addition, the clerk is passing around a supplementary exhibit for you to take a look at. Mr. Moore, please bring your delegation forward. Welcome back to our committee. We are looking forward to hearing your viewpoints today on the organization of the education system. Start by introducing yourself officially for the purpose of electronic Hansard and begin whenever you wish.

ONTARIO PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION

Mr. Moore: My name is John Moore. I am president of the Ontario Principals' Association. With me today is Sue Thornham, who is our membership chairman. We expected other members, but being in-school administrators there were some things that became a priority this morning.

For those who are not familiar with our group, we are a volunteer group of in-school administrators. We do belong to the usual federations. Our main purpose is communication and professional development. Those are the two additional handouts I brought this morning: our September newsletter to administrators across Ontario and a brochure outlining our main professional development thrust for this year. You would be most welcome to take interest in either of those.

We were asked specifically this morning to address grade promotion, semestering, streaming and OSIS and have on purpose again kept our formal presentation relatively short. We would be pleased then to answer questions and discuss other issues you may wish to talk about.

Education, as we see it, has been developed over a long time by the shared experience of the people of Ontario and practising educators. There are many sound bases there, which need, of course, to be continually revised and improved, and we hope that is the effort of this review.

Sometimes it is distorted by the fact that we have brand-new ideas which are oversubscribed, either by the enthusiasm of their originators or by the media picking up small parts out of context. Probably the revision of math was the best example. It came out as "new math" and the media tried to tell us that two and two was not four.

I think we need to select the useful and move forward. Obviously, if we are going to develop

thinking citizens for tomorrow, they must have the ability to learn throughout their lives and a broad base to select the specifics they need to train for in later life.

What we have tried to do in each of the four areas is make a fairly definitive statement to defend that position and, hopefully, that will generate some questions either in support or against.

I will first address grade promotion. I guess about as definitive as you can be is to say that in its strictest sense it is unsuitable for Ontario schools. If you are going to talk about grade promotion in its strictest sense, you are talking about a particular package of material which is suitable for every student who is age 9 and which every student will accomplish by some magical mark-stone every 12 months and which makes no compensation for the student's ability or his social and emotional growth and all of the other things that are related to it. If you wanted to be strict about grade promotion, you could pass as many as 80 per cent of the subjects and still fail your year and end up repeating those kinds of things. I think that is totally unacceptable.

Certainly throughout the primary, which we consider junior kindergarten to grade 3, junior, grades 4 to 6, or intermediate, grades 7 to 10, I think we should be dealing with students in a homogeneous kind of setting where the program is modified and they are situated with their peers, working alongside those students who would be their own age. We should modify the program to suit their abilities and their interests.

When you get into the senior level, there is a place for subject promotion where a student, knowing then the base that he has established, can pursue subjects of his interest in greater depth. I think that the place for promotion by subject is in the senior division and, again, it is still not grade promotion. That ties in fairly closely with streaming and so on that comes up later.

I dealt with semestering second. It is a much more difficult area, I think, to come out either very strongly for or against. There are some very definite advantages and, we feel, some concerns.

Semestering does allow larger blocks of time, and this should provide for group work, pupil-centred approaches, shared learning and reduction in the lecture type of programming. Subjects in both semesters of a year can allow for catch-up in special needs. It can allow for advancement where abilities are there, and possibly the completion of your total high school program in a shorter time.

But it does bring concerns when you have subjects that require the maintenance of skills, like the speaking of a first or second language, mathematics, typing or instrumental music. In a semestered system, you are sometimes as much as eight months away from those subjects between semesters, and it is very hard to maintain the skills of these subjects over that long period of time.

We think there should be some exploration of a system that would allow a high school to be both, to have part of its day on a semestered system or part of its subjects on a semestered system and other subjects where the maintenance of skills needs constant continuation nonsemestered. I am not exactly sure how that would work, but it seems to us that it would be possible if it were explored.

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Third is streaming, which goes back to what I was talking about in grade promotion. We feel that streaming could only be appropriate at the senior division of high school, where it is done by subject. Before that time, it is not appropriate to create classes of higher and lower ability. The students quickly perceive that type of placement; they quickly develop an attitude to that type of thing and obviously produce what is expected of them. If you have perceived that you are in the lower placement group, you are going to act quite differently.

By putting homogeneous groups together, you get equal access to program base, you get flexible ability groupings, you get a sharing of skills and interests, and I think it most resembles society at large. We do not stream society. Senior students are more aware of their abilities and interests and they have already established their academic and social base, so we, as a group, oppose streaming until it is done by subject in the senior division.

Last of the four is OSIS, which really set out a program style, as we believe, for the intermediate division. We saw that it centred on two main thrusts. One was a time allotment to ensure that all subjects received a fair distribution of the program and that arts and other types of programs were not left for the end of the day or left off when time ran out. It also had a thrust in a program style which was student-centred and shared learning and learning by doing.

I think OSIS really was a good thrust. The time frames were fairly easy to implement. You needed X hours per year or X minutes per week in a subject. I do not think the other part of OSIS has been well established, because it took a change in teacher style. It took training students to do

shared learning and more mobile learning. Teachers may not have had the background in that kind of teaching prior to OSIS. We do not feel that has been as well established and certainly support OSIS and support a thrust in developing the type of programming that OSIS suggests.

I will try to briefly summarize a statement about each of the four so that I can refresh our position.

Grade promotion, we feel, is not appropriate. We may always need to have some kind of a grade designation handle on what we call a group of students in a particular class in the school to identify them and for public understanding. I am not sure grade is the best handle, but at this point in time it is the best-understood handle, as long as people know that the students in grade 4 are not always doing grade 4 program. The program is the important thing, and it must be modified to meet them.

Semestering has both good and concerns and, hopefully, a combination can be found.

Streaming should be reserved for the senior level and done by subjects. Before that, there should be homogeneous groups with program modification.

OSIS is a sound idea that needs to have the programming style more fully implemented.

Hopefully, we have taken a position on each in Canada. We can carry on with discussion and questions if that is your wish.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. It was certainly a very succinct brief. You have allowed lots of time for questions, so we appreciate that.

Just before we do go to questions, I want to mention about the semestering. You indicated that you would like a combination of the best of two worlds. We have heard from a number of presenters that they see difficulties with the semestering and they would like changes in the system.

I have basically a combination school in my riding, Northern Secondary, which in some ways is based on the traditional concept. The first four years are nonsemestered; however, they do have a two-day time cycle for the timetables and they do have longer periods. There are 76-minute periods, and they take courses every other day. They are taking a full range of courses, but they are having the longer time periods. Then in grade 13 they are on the fully semestered system.

Mr. Moore: So they really have accommodated the need for longer periods in some subjects without having the break time in skills.

Madam Chairman: That is right, and they have said that they are finding it seems to be working extremely well. I do not know if this is the kind of concept you are looking for, but it certainly seemed to me to be very appealing.

Mr. Moore: I was not aware of that school. It is that sort of thing where we felt the longer time periods are needed for things such as history and science, but you do not really need to leave your math skills or your typing skills from January of one year to September of the next before you come back to them.

Madam Chairman: That is right, and this tends to be, I think, a much more flexible system. Yet you will have it be more uniform in that students will not be at the end of their secondary school career and have to go back for three more courses because the semestering system did not allow them to fit in their courses.

Mr. Moore: Would their grades 9 and 10 programs then still be subject oriented in rotary, or would it be that they spend, say, a minimum of 50 per cent of their day with the home-room teacher and with the same group of students? I think one of the problems that high schools see in the dropouts is that in grades 9 and 10 they are so lost with the multiteacher, multisubject mobility.

Madam Chairman: My understanding is that they do have a major emphasis on the home-room core subjects and that it eases the transition for students who are going from intermediate into senior and that terribly vulnerable age of children, when they are not sure socially and they are not sure academically of where they are going; that it helps make that transition.

Mr. Moore: We saw one of the major changes in elementary to secondary in that in many elementary schools—maybe not so much in the junior highs—the home-room teacher had the students for a minimum of 50 per cent of the time in their core area. So the teacher was with a group of students who identified with that teacher.

In high schools, particularly with the subject programming, you had math with this group, English with that group and science with that group. Each has a different teacher, so you really do not have an identifiable group. I think if they are doing something in a core program as well with that, it would certainly be a forward-thinking school.

Madam Chairman: I certainly think it is.

Now that I have done my little plug for the wonderful schools in my riding, we will go to Mrs. O'Neill, followed by Mr. Keyes.

Mrs. O'Neill: I would like to go to the one paragraph you have on OSIS. Several people have spoken to us quite specifically about OSIS, and others a little more nebulously, as have you. I would like you to try, if you could, to address your last sentence: "The complete strategies of OSIS, if fully operational, would provide a positive student-centred program..."

Could you tell us what you see as the weaknesses of the OSIS document so that we would have something specific from your recommendation?

Mr. Moore: What we were trying to say there was that we felt OSIS integrated subjects and suggested a student-centred approach, a student learning by doing, but we felt many schools had not moved to that. So it was not the weakness of OSIS; it was the weakness of the system in following that recommendation of OSIS.

Mrs. O'Neill: Could you be a little more specific? My background is teaching, but I still do not know what you are actually saying. I am sorry. Perhaps you could give us an example.

Mr. Moore: The senior elementary students in many cases were moving toward a lecture-type, an information-giving classroom, rather than a student discovery, student learning by writing and doing rather than being fed, rather than being told. OSIS, I think, was a thrust back the other way, more like a primary-junior program, where it was an activity that students shared and did, rather than were taught to. I think OSIS was promoting that but I do not think we have really got there yet. I do not think we have made the move that OSIS was suggesting.

Mrs. O'Neill: Why would that be? Is teacher education needed? Has the document not been out there long enough?

Mr. Moore: I think it has been there long enough. A lot of us who taught for a long time in those divisions were very comfortable being in control. Until students had worked through that type of programming in the earlier years, just to move into it was very difficult because they were not sure what to do and the teacher really was not sure what to do. So they kind of retreated into the more comfortable feeling, "I'm in control."

Mrs. O'Neill: Is that the only weakness you see in the OSIS implementation?

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Mrs. Thornham: I can add a couple, I think. I suggest that some of the reasons that it has not been fully implemented are things such as the teacher education that you mentioned. I think that is a critical area. There is subject orientation

of teachers. The Socratic method, as John has pointed out, has been long established as being the teacher's fount of all knowledge and all that kind of stuff. There are the rotary timetable and the size of those schools.

There are many reasons, in my opinion, that it is not simple. Many of them apply to secondary schools as well. It is not simple to change that organization just simply to become more child-centred as opposed to subject-centred and content-centred. There are a whole bunch of reasons, many of them arising as a result of the organization of schools—the way they are organized.

I do not think you can change all of those ills without changing, for example, the size of schools. A school with 2,000 students is one in which it is very difficult to form relationships. I think Radwanski correctly identifies, as the single most important item that keeps kids in school and keeps them feeling good, the kind of relationships they form. That is what they are not getting in these large industrial-type plants we are putting them in.

Mr. Jackson: I would like to talk with you a bit about grade promotion and explore an area which we really have not as a committee looked at, but I would like to raise today. I am not picking on you particularly, but one of the important responsibilities of principals is to supervise teachers to ensure that they provide the necessary instruction to meet the policies of the board and the assertions of the Ministry of Education regarding the level of education a child is entitled to develop under.

My concern would be that at no point have we ever had a presentation that talks about grade promotion and the fact that it may be a benchmark for the public. But it is less relevant a benchmark to the individual learning styles of individual students. That I agree with.

However, it strikes me that at some point a principal is ultimately responsible for ensuring that there is forward progress involved with a student and that the teacher is capable of doing that. In the absence of being able to do that, there are strategies to overcome that.

I am not trying to do an end run on an issue here. I am trying to ask you as a principal if you could give us a further insight about some of the problems of structuring schools. Is your experience elementary or secondary?

Mr. Moore: Elementary.

Mr. Jackson: Good. On that issue of grade promotion, and I am glad I picked grade promotion over semestering, talk to us, if you

would, please, about what more or less responsibility has been put on the principal in terms of supervision, given that we have shifted away from grade promotion, which was clearly an easier way to supervise a teacher than it is today.

Mr. Moore: It was a much easier way in the sense that there was a package there. If they did not complete the package, they just stayed back. I think now what you have to do is look at each individual child.

If they are not coming along with the kind of material that is appropriate for their age, then I think it is necessary to discuss that with the help around you, with resource people and so on, the kinds of things that you can do for that individual student, and take a serious look at the programming and the style of programming, their placement and that sort of thing.

It becomes much more that a case of: "Here is one class that you need to do. Decide where they are going next year." Instead, it is: "Here are 30 students. Where are they going next year?"

Mr. Jackson: I guess in the 10 years I was a trustee, I always had difficulty with this point. It was hard for me to get the principal, teacher and the parent to sit down together in a nonconfrontational way to discuss why the son or daughter was not progressing at the speed he or she should have been and focus on remedies.

I do not wish to overgeneralize in this area. We have outstanding teachers and outstanding principals. I am not suggesting for a moment we do not. I somehow see the fact that there is more of an attitude of, "Let's wait and see if the child will develop at his or her own speed." There is less and less the issue of, "We believe the child could achieve or work more to his potential, given a certain amount of individualized program and attention."

Understanding all the while that we have classrooms that could be smaller that are not, classroom settings that are inappropriate, long bus trips, and there are a whole series of complicating factors, I am just trying to stay focused more on the issue of what has happened to the supervision of teachers as we move in transition from a grade promotion mentality to a continuous progress model, because I feel there are some deficiencies.

When I talked to one of the principal groups, they made four or five statements about what they could achieve under certain circumstances, and teacher supervision never occurred to them. I know it is not weighted as strongly as it could be by principals, whether they want to admit it publicly or not.

Mr. Moore: I think you are right in the sense that it is less of a pressure cooker, if you want, in education than it used to be, in the sense that you sort of do it or else. Now there is much more, as you say, wait and see or, "Give them a chance to grow a little bit."

I do not think teacher supervision is necessarily left off. I think in the successful schools the principal is very much aware of what the teacher's program is and is involved with discussing those students and in the room seeing what they are doing and those kinds of things.

I think a lot of the things that we always have had for the majority of kids are still there. I do not think they have changed; they are still getting the kinds of things they probably did before for the grade they are in. I think it is those fringe areas we have tried to provide extra for and tried to provide modifications for to take them out of that do-or-die situation. I do not think a lot of the other things have really changed.

Mr. Jackson: I realize we have a bit of time. If I could continue, there is another area I was concerned about. I was reflecting last night about a couple of things that we may not have raised during the general area of how we organize our schools. I know I am deviating a little bit, but it is somewhat germane to the questions of grade promotion and streaming in the elementary, and that is the complexities of split grades and team teaching.

I am sort of raising this for you at this point, but I regret now that I did not perhaps broaden this section of our inquiry a bit to include that, because I think within the way we organize the school those two issues might have been more appropriately raised, and how a much larger class on a team teaching basis of 45, 50 and 60 kids affects the issues of streaming and/or grade promotion.

Mr. Moore: Sue may want to comment on this too.

First of all, to deal with your idea of split grades, if you are programming appropriately for the student, I do not think split grades really cause any concern. Parents will not necessarily agree with that statement. As I say, your grouping and programming really do not make a difference where they are.

I think the problem, particularly at the elementary level when you are talking about team teaching, is that it is inappropriate to supervise that many students and be aware of their program. I am suggesting that when you say "team teaching" and you talk about 50 to 1, one teacher is getting some planning time or break

time while the other one is dealing with the 50. I do not see that as appropriate at all.

I can see, where there are a number of grades at one level, setting up centres that may be jointly used by them and three or two or whatever the appropriate number of teachers is for the number of students working as a unit. That kind of team teaching is very appropriate, team planning and team teaching, but to use it as a way of containing a large group, no.

Mr. Jackson: I appreciate your comments about split grades, because I think the public generally has the wrong perception of the positive things that are achieved in split grades. There is some evidence around to indicate that there are some very positive things that can be achieved. But if you really look at it in terms of grade promotion, it becomes a way of bringing the public in to look at breaking down single-year benchmarks and to look at the class, which is basically not always from a broader range of abilities because there are two grades. In fact, it could be just identical to—

Mr. Moore: A regular grade.

Mr. Jackson: —a regular grade. Yet we somehow feel that there are some significant problems associated. It takes a special kind of teacher to be able to convey that to the parents, but I see some very positive reports coming out in that area. I wish perhaps we had asked for people to comment so that we could have done a little more service to the full impact of how we structure our elementary schools.

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Mr. Moore: Sometimes, in the older grade, it forces the teacher to go to work with the other group level and give them some time to think on their own.

Mr. Jackson: It is a preliminary stage of mentoring or tutoring. One of my elementary years was an experience with split grades, which was unusual for my jurisdiction, but I look back on it as a time when I was provided with opportunities. I appreciate your putting on the record some of the points about it.

Mr. Moore: There are a few schools that have tried family groupings too, where they take all of the three primary years and put a group together that has some of each. Let's say they had 30. They would move the 10 senior ones out and bring in 10 new ones each year. It provides a real group that they come to identify with over the whole primary division. It has not always been a bad experience.

Mr. Jackson: We experimented with that in Halton with the Halton early identification work that was done in the early 1970s, some pioneer work with that. But you get into ability grouping, and it can almost become a form of streaming if you are not careful. You have to be very careful with that one. But you are right, there are some positive things happening.

If I can, on the semestering issue, I do appreciate that you have clearly stated for the record the notion that you support the exploration of ways to integrate subject areas to provide some semestering with nonsemestered situations in student timetables. One of the principals' groups did not go that far. It just identified the pros and the cons. I happen to concur with your recommendation and appreciate that you were able to state that. I see many things to add to your pros and cons list, but I am sure you wanted to keep your brief brief.

Mr. Moore: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We will go to Mr. Keyes.

Mr. Keyes: This is an informative presentation. I think, to Mr. Jackson and the rest, the ultimate in split grades, and to prove that it does not have any impact, is to go back to the early part of the century, when I was teaching and had the one-room country school, eight grades, all subjects. That is a real good split grade situation. It certainly does not have any negative impact at all; so I never had very much time for any of my staff who complained about a split grade. As far as I was concerned, that was merely a mental mindset that was an unfortunate block.

Mr. Moore: I went to one and taught in one; so I know what you are talking about.

Mr. Keyes: You taught in one as well.

Mr. Moore: Yes.

Mr. Keyes: It must have been one of the last ones left around in Ontario.

I think most of the Ontario Principals' Association represents elementary principals and vice-principals. Is that correct?

Mr. Moore: For the most part, yes.

Mr. Keyes: I want to stay with that and I want to touch on grade promotion and stay there as well, because maybe it is time we said to the ministry that this whole myth of grade promotion should just simply disappear. In the document *The Formative Years*, we have certainly talked about a continuum of skills and knowledge, and yet we are desperately clinging and hanging on to grade promotion. That is because society—the parents but also the teachers—has wanted to have

that little benchmark thing to hold on to, to say where they were or what they were teaching next year: "We were teaching grade 7. We were not teaching 11-year-old children" and the rest.

Where are we going to get support from principals and the teachers' groups in order to convince the parents that now is the time, let's say 1989, that we are going to drop the whole concept of grades? Perhaps we look at what we have written as documents, tried to implement for years, *The Formative Years*, and we have a continuum of skills through which the children move. Maybe in the process, you go by divisions, for starters, so that you are spending time in a primary division, and you move through to a junior, an intermediate and then a senior.

To me, it would fit very well with some of the things we have talked about. You have suggested streaming would not take place until the senior level. That is fine. We heard yesterday and the day before about people who believe there should be a high school graduation diploma at the end of grade 10, after acquiring a number of credits, and that grades 11 and 12 should be specialized for people going on to post-secondary education. To me, that all seemed to be fitting into this type of pattern we are looking at, but how are we going to get teachers, principals and parents to accept that, suddenly, we just drop grade promotion?

Mr. Moore: I guess I see the need of some kind of handle for the public to have something to hang on to—the first year in school, the second year in school or grade 1, I do not know. With the tradition that has been built, I do not think we can ever get by without some kind of handle. I think there are better handles, but I do not know how you change a handle that has been there for 100 years.

Mr. Keyes: So why do we not talk about the student's first year in school—the first year being junior kindergarten, the second year and so on—and the student himself or the parents will know how long the child has been in school?

Mr. Moore: A few schools have tried that, and the parent comes in and asks, "What grade is that?"

Mr. Keyes: As teachers, we have to keep saying what skills they are learning.

Mrs. Thornham: I was going to say that, in my feeling, part of that is we have not done a very good job of explaining what it is we are trying to do, because certainly currently in my school we talk much more around how many years we expect a child to be in a division as opposed to

whether or not he is in grade X, Y or Z. We really do not care very much about that.

I guess one of the points I was going to make with regard to all these issues around comments that have been made about split grades is that the public perception is, "Split grades are fine, as long as my kid is in the lower half of the split." Again, I do not think we have done a very good job. They say, "It is okay for my kid to be in grade 1-2 if the kid is in grade 1," because then the whole idea of course is that is really neat, he is getting all kinds of enrichment and is therefore a smart grade 1. But if he is in grade 2 of a grade 1-2, it is amazing how many extremely well informed parents really have a conniption fit about that, because, "What you are saying is you have this child and half the class is a year behind him." I do not think we as educators have done a very good job in terms of informing the public in general.

Madam Chairman: Excuse me. I wonder if you could move a little closer to the mike. Hansard is having a little difficulty picking up your voice.

Mrs. Thornham: I do not have a very long neck, but I will try to stick it out a little further.

I really think educators in general, the ministry and all of us collectively, have to accept some ownership for the fact that we are not very good public relations people. Of course, that has not been part of our training.

With regard to the promotion and instructional supervision kinds of issues that have been raised earlier, I believe that principals are being more and more accountable for being instructional leaders. It used to be, 20 years ago, that a principal was largely an administrator. They ran around, pushed paper around, played with figures and so forth. That is not the expectation currently. Certainly the research that is being done, by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and so on, in the field is that principals are much more instructional leaders.

In terms of accountability with children when we talk about promotion, certainly myself and my colleagues in my board look at individual children. You have to try to weigh, and lots of times you make a best guess. There is nothing in education which is cast in stone, because you are dealing with individuals, be they teachers, kids, parents or whatever. I always put the kid first; what do I think is best for this child?

For example, I have a high English-as-a-second-language component in my school, 70 to 80 per cent. If a person wanted to hang standards, like Mr. Radwanski is suggesting, in front of me,

then 80 per cent of my kids would fail. Is that what we want? We heard two presentations previously that addressed similar kinds of ethnic issues in our schools. We cannot be all things to all people. I think that was one of the points of the report as well.

What is our focus and how do we address all these needs across our province? I had a need to respond to a whole bunch of things that came up that I made some notes about, but I think the split-grade issue is one we have to do much more public relations on, all of us in education. I do not think teachers, principals or boards can do it all. It has to be a joint approach.

Mr. Keyes: I think the ministry has its responsibility there along with those in the classrooms. If we get away from the grade designations and then teachers assess 20, 25 or 30 students, depending on the level they are at, we can follow through from a primary level with the smaller numbers in the classroom.

I think we have to continue to work with the parents, again with the ministry probably taking a big lead to say that it is a continuum of skills that they are trying to do and that it is appropriate that they be with their age peers, in my opinion, and progress through more by division. Maybe we could get them to accept promotion by division in the first instance, even though that is still artificial. But we will never get away with doing without some type of designation.

1140

Mr. Moore: Getting back to the OSIS point earlier, this too is one of the problems with the activity-type learning in the older grades. We talk about 20 being the magic number in primary, where we want activity learning, but in the intermediates it is okay to have 30.

Mr. Keyes: I think there is some rationale. I am not defending the ministry position on this, but there is an independence developed in the students as they get older. They can do more independent learning. That should be one of our major goals of education, to be more independent learners, for activity centred in the senior level, in high school, as in a chemistry lab. We do not want them blowing it up, but they should have developed a sense of some self-instruction and how to learn. That can justify larger numbers.

The only other one—I must stop, because time is up—is the whole process. If we are going to make that successful, then we have to do a better job of evaluating the students to find out where they are as individuals and remediating them better. You made some reference to this before, in speaking to Mr. Jackson. Are we doing a good

job of remediating? The areas of greatest criticism we have listened to in the last six weeks are in the fields of literacy and numeracy. For some reason, we still are not doing a very good job there in working with the ones who have not achieved it well.

To tie in, I want a comment from you as to what your reaction is to the testing in selected areas merely for the purposes of letting you make comparisons—the grade 6 reading and math testing coming up.

Mr. Moore: As long as it is for comparison purposes, for you to see where—

Mr. Keyes: That is all it is slated for.

Mr. Moore: If it stays with that, I do not see it as a problem. I think it would give you something to use as a mark in your school to compare how your judgement has been. I guess I still have fears that this is not where it will stop.

Mr. Keyes: I am quite sure it will not go much further than that. I want to hear about the remediation, and then we are finished.

Mrs. Thornham: I will go to the remediation, but with regard to the testing, I think most of the large boards in Ontario are currently doing exactly what you are proposing should happen for diagnostic kinds of purposes.

In terms of remediation, I think it depends largely on the kind of school one has. There is a great variance across this province, as I am sure you are aware. Certainly in my school we do a great deal of remediation, though not as much as I would like to see. Again, I think Mr. Radwanski, in his report, indicates that this is one area where we need more resources in education. He talks particularly about the secondary level, but I think it is true at all levels in education. As long as we are trying to address this multiplicity of needs, then we cannot do that. We now have 20 three- and four-year-olds in classrooms. That is a lot of kids. They are young. Some of them are not even toilet trained.

I think when we talk about remediation, attached to that is an automatic assumption that we are talking about bringing all the kids to some kind of acceptable level. Again, I caution, who is going to determine what that is? Is there a common level that in fact we should be expecting every single Ontario student to achieve?

I get a little nervous about that, not because I do not believe the kids should read and write, but because I am the one accountable for delivering a program for every kind of child who walks in the door of my school. We do that to the very best of our ability, but in terms of making that generaliz-

able across the province for every child, I really have some grave concerns about who ought to be doing that and if indeed we should. I am not convinced of either question.

Mr. Moore: I think as well that our thrust in remediation has been around the academics, so often we tend to not get into the guidance counselling kind of roles and the emotional kind of things that are affecting why they are not learning. Particularly at the elementary levels, we need to get into much more of a guidance role for the emotional turmoils in which some of these students come to school. That may very well be affecting why they are having trouble with the problem.

Mr. Keyes: That goes back to the teacher and the amount of workshopping you do with the teachers in recognizing the social problems of the students—teacher training.

Mr. Moore: For instance, in my school, Monday night is to teach teachers to deal with children of alcoholics, because we have a number of students whose parents we believe, and I think are fairly safe in saying, abuse alcohol. We are dealing with those children coming to school every morning, sometimes without breakfast.

Mr. Jackson: Sometimes abused.

Mr. Moore: Yes, and unfortunately the social services are not quite what they claim to be, because my experience has been that if you phone them to report abuse, although it is a fine if I do not and it is confidential if I do, I have had them sit in their office and phone the family and say, "The principal called to say...." It is not very easy to work with the parents after that call has been made.

Mr. Jackson: Yesterday, when I was in Windsor, I met with the sexual assault centre and the board privately to discuss the very point raised. I am very pleased to report that at least the Windsor board is developing a protocol for reporting with all social agencies, so that it is up front, is understood. I am delighted to hear of your work, but I believe we should be co-ordinating more of that through the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Education, to make sure the linkage is strong, because there is some serious suffering going on in our schools.

Mr. Moore: I think the major change with the two ministries in recent years, and I think we talked about this in July, was the reduction of health services and the greater need we have for them.

Mr. Jackson: Where are the bucks?

Mrs. Thornham: It is critical in our area. I am in Peel, and of course with the growth in Peel, they cannot begin to keep up. If I report a child, basically it comes down to—and I do not think they would admit it publicly—I can talk about all the prevention I like, but until the kid does something that is life-threatening either to himself or somebody else, I cannot get any action. It is simply a matter that there are not enough resources to go around, so the children's aid and so on simply cannot respond to the demands they have.

Mr. Jackson: With regard to the school board in Windsor, its protocol is to refer to the sexual assault centre. It is understood, and in fact even the children's aid society is now referring. From the school board, it goes to the children's aid and the children's aid only does the workup and immediately sends the family and the child to the sexual assault centre, which has been deemed to be the most appropriate vehicle in that area.

The unfortunate part is we do not fund our sexual assault centres to a level in which they can provide counselling. We do not wish the school board to become the counsellors and the depository of all the solutions. We have resources within the community, which are not being funded, to work in concert with an improved identification system on the part of teachers and a commitment from the board to work with the community resources.

Mr. Moore: I have one right near the school. I registered some schools last week. The answer was, "If you see a fellow with a grey beard and a brown Cadillac, call the police."

Mr. Keyes: Stop driving Cadillacs.

Madam Chairman: Looking at the Ontario principals' report, we know that you had another life without a beard, so that too is possible.

Mr. Moore: Yes, it comes and goes.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank you, Mr. Moore and Mrs. Thornham, for coming before our committee today. We have appreciated your contribution.

Mr. Moore: Thank you very much. We are pleased at any time to help out.

Mr. Keyes: The committee will drop in and see you about the secondary report, if you give us a gratuitous registration.

Mr. Moore: We would be pleased to have you join us.

Madam Chairman: You notice that was only partially what you wanted, Mr. Keyes. I did not notice "gratuitous" being in the offer.

The select committee on education stands
adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The committee recessed at 11:49 a.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:08 p.m. in committee room 1.

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to open this session of the select committee on education as we continue with the organization of the educational process in Ontario.

Just before I welcome our first presenters today, I would commend this to the attention of the members: this is an additional brief which has just come in. Would you please take it with you to Thunder Bay tomorrow evening for our hearings in Thunder Bay on Thursday. If any member does not have a copy, please let us know, but I know our clerk would never, ever let us down.

I would like to welcome the North York Board of Education. We are pleased to have you before our committee today. We have allocated one half-hour for your presentation and we hope that at least half of that will be left for members' questions, because I know, just from previous experience, that there are going to be many questions. Please begin whenever you wish. Perhaps you would start by identifying yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

NORTH YORK BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Filion: We appreciate the opportunity to come before you. I am John Filion, chairman of the North York Board of Education. To my left is Karl Kinzinger, our director of education; to my right, Bob Marner, assistant director of education; and farther to the right, Agnes Clebek, who is the principal at York Mills Collegiate Institute. We also have with us Gerry Brouwer, who is the assistant to the director, and Trustee Gerri Gershon.

In light of your remarks, I will read quickly.

The North York Board of Education believes society's needs can best be met by an education system designed around the needs of the individual student.

In examining OSIS, semestering, streaming and grade promotion in the context of that basic philosophy, we believe that OSIS is fine in theory, but that in practice its intent is not being followed. Semestering decisions should be left to local school boards. Streaming should not begin until grade 11 and individual standards for each student should be developed in grades 9 and 10. Students should be grouped by age up to and including grade 8, with support systems in place to help those who have difficulties.

OSIS: Although we support the general philosophy underlying the policies set out in OSIS, a number of constraints have become apparent in application, particularly in grades 9 and 10.

To obtain an Ontario secondary school diploma, a student requires 30 credits, 16 of which are compulsory. Most students choose a first- and second-year program consisting mainly of compulsory credits. This was not the original intent of OSIS. Rather, it was intended that students would take a balanced program of compulsory and noncompulsory general education credits.

In practice, students fearful of losing the opportunity to quickly obtain all the compulsory credits frequently limit their program flexibility and diversity, and they become discouraged. The system of levels of difficulty was intended to recognize varying degrees of student ability and interest in particular subjects. In practice, most students take all their courses at the same level of difficulty. Students aiming to attend university will seldom choose general education subjects which are not offered at the advanced level; for example, music, visual arts and industrial arts.

Students enrolled in basic-level or general-level courses will seldom reach ahead and take advanced-level courses, even in subjects in which they have the ability to do so. Hence, the possibility of selecting a program matched to each student's individual profile of ability and interest is seldom realized. They require more guidance and more attention to help them chart clear paths to their goals.

We are concerned that general-level and basic-level courses are often described as watered-down versions of advanced courses. In North York, we have tried to correct this situation by introducing flexibility through program packages such as "co-operative education" and "world of work." These courses have been very successful in meeting the needs of students in general-level and basic-level programs. Young people find them useful, relevant and satisfying. They give credit for other than purely academic abilities and lead to a greater measure of success.

In spite of their overall popularity, co-operative education programs are not selected by students in the advanced level. A greater problem for students in the general-level and basic-level streams is the compulsory credits, where students are often faced with limited success. These

courses call for special support and enhancement.

Most of our secondary school students will not attend university, but will attend another form of post-secondary training or join the labour force. Secondary school curriculum must reflect this reality and strengthen the essential skill development areas, while extending program flexibility and the possibilities for individual student success.

Meeting the individual needs of students is more difficult in a multicultural community. More than 65 per cent of North York students come from homes where their mother's first language is other than English. Therefore, programming for individual differences among students is especially critical now, due to the ethnic and cultural diversity of our student population. These difficulties are compounded by the fact that many of our immigrant and refugee students arrive with very little educational experience due to interruptions caused by political strife in their country.

I will depart from the text for a moment to give you some statistics which I think you will find quite startling. As indicated, 65 per cent of our students in North York have mothers born outside of Canada; 28 per cent of our students were themselves born outside of Canada. We have 4,500 out of approximately 60,000 students—that is, about seven per cent—who come from refugee-producing countries. About 40 per cent of our students—that is, 24,000—require English-as-a-second-language assistance. That number, by the way, has quadrupled in the last two years.

In summary, we recommend that the Ministry of Education conduct a review of OSIS to determine whether it is being implemented as intended; that the review of OSIS identify areas which need appropriate support and resources for full implementation with special attention to the needs of the intermediate division student; that greater emphasis be placed on the development of basic-level and general-level programs different in substance and nature from the corresponding advanced-level course.

Semestering: in North York, all schools but one offer a variation of semestering. A major advantage of semestering is that longer periods make it possible for the teacher to get to know the students more quickly and to develop strong student-staff relationships. They also provide a more intensive learning experience.

Semestering provides opportunities for students to fulfil OSIS subject requirements in four,

four and a half or five years as individual needs, abilities and motivation requires. Through semestering, potential dropouts can enter or re-enter school within the school year without waiting for the beginning of a new academic year. The mobility of families in large urban areas, the number of adolescent and adult re-entries to school and the increasing number of immigrants arriving throughout the year increase the need for multiple entry times.

Semestering also has its limitations. There is a potential lack of continuity in learning subjects such as music, languages and mathematics. Intermediate division students often find it difficult to concentrate for 75- or 80-minute periods.

Teachers, too, need more time to prepare lessons. It requires using diverse methods and approaches to evaluate students and maintain their interest. As we move from the traditional 40-minute period to the 80-minute semestered period, a thorough examination of teaching practices must occur. It is critical that extensive staff development, curriculum development and program planning are provided for the effective transition. Ministry guidelines neither reflect the reality of a variety of timetabling methods nor offer assistance to students in this very important area.

The introduction of a 12-month trisemestered year merits serious consideration. This would give students greater flexibility in managing their program and acquiring credits, ease student re-entry, provide greater control of the quality and consistency of program offerings and increase the use of school facilities.

In summary, we recommend that decisions about semestering be left to the autonomy of the local school board; that decisions regarding semestering should be based on program and individual student needs; that ministry guidelines should reflect the reality of alternative models of scheduling and should provide appropriate levels of support; that alternative models of program delivery should be encouraged, such as block timetabling for the intermediate division, combinations of semestered and traditional modes, the use of credit modules, study skills programs, intensive and booster programs and the introduction of a 12-month, trisemestered school year.

Streaming: The intention of streaming as recognized in OSIS is to offer students a choice of programs based on individual aptitudes, learning potential and needs. Although OSIS encourages students to select courses at different levels of difficulty and to change levels, in reality

most students take most credits at one level of difficulty. They see themselves and they are seen by others as basic, general or advanced. This real or imagined labelling makes it difficult to take advantage of the flexibility intended by OSIS.

Properly followed, OSIS enables students to take advanced credits in areas of strength and courses at lower levels in areas where they show less interest or ability. Unfortunately, educators have not been as aggressive as they should be in motivating students to enrol in courses that challenge their ability. Too often, the decision is made on the basis of current academic achievement rather than true learning potential.

Students from lower socioeconomic or immigrant backgrounds are especially likely to choose courses or be counselled into courses below their true ability level, which is often masked by their limited experience with the English language. Such students should be encouraged to enrol in higher level programs which reflect their learning potential. They should be given special support rather than being allowed or encouraged to take courses at an inappropriate low level of difficulty, a level from which they seldom escape.

1420

We accept the criticism that grade 9 is too early to make educational decisions that will limit later educational or career aspirations, and we recommend that streaming be delayed until grade 11. Grades 9 and 10 should be viewed as a transition period. At the same time, the transition between grades 8 and 9 must be less abrupt.

The transition from middle or junior high school to secondary school is a dramatic one for young people. It is a move from a more protected and personalized environment to a more competitive and institutionalized one. We need to recognize the needs of the adolescent learner by providing an effective advocacy mentoring program where a strong sense of group identity and belonging is developed and positive relationships between students and teachers are fostered. At this stage of development, the young person's sense of self-worth and identity are at a critical stage. A warm, supportive, secure and more structured environment is needed.

The program for these students should have clearly established goals that include high teacher expectations for the development of essential skills and concepts. Teachers working in a collaborative manner should reinforce these skills and concepts within their own field to ensure carryover from one subject to another, breaking down the divisions between subjects as

much as possible and providing a more integrated learning experience for students. Parents and teams of teachers should work co-operatively to identify learning needs and suitable programs for individual students.

A stimulating environment that encourages adolescents to reach for greater levels of achievement while at the same time reinforcing their self-confidence is essential. However, we are concerned that replacing three levels of difficulty at grades 9 and 10 with a single level and uniform standard of achievement would be disastrous for many students.

If our provincial education system is to move towards an unstreamed grade 9 and 10 structure, teachers will require considerable support in developing appropriate standards for each student. During these years, students must have a wide variety of courses designed to help them assess their own aptitudes and academic potential. Each student will spend the final years of secondary school focusing on those courses that will lead to employment or to post-secondary education. Most courses in these senior division years should be streamed as currently described in OSIS.

In summary, we recommend that starting in grade 11, streaming be implemented according to the intent of OSIS; that teachers be given training and guidance in the development of appropriate individualized standards for each student in grades 9 and 10; that transition programs be developed for students in grades 9 and 10.

Grade promotion: The North York Board of Education has implemented a policy of age-appropriate placement whereby students move through school from junior kindergarten to grade 9 with their age peers. Exceptions to this policy are few and are normally based on developmental or health factors. Beginning in grade 9, students are promoted by individual credits on the basis of achievement. North York provides a variety of support measures to ensure that students who remain grouped with their peers experience success.

We have studied the issue of student promotion extensively for the past 17 years in North York and we are convinced that except for a small minority of students, repeating a grade is the least effective strategy for improving student achievement. Over the past four years, we have reduced the number of overaged students in our elementary schools to five per cent from 17 per cent. Experience and research have shown that the practice is wise, practical and effective.

Promotion data reveal that the dropout rate of students entering grade 9 at the age of 15 is three times higher than that of students entering at the appropriate age of 14.

Grade promotion, the process by which students move from one grade to the next only when they have achieved measurable, predetermined standards of performance in designated skills or when they have learned specific concepts, conveys to the public the impression that schools ensure all students meet a certain set of desired standards.

Grade promotion is easy to administer and inexpensive in terms of materials and staff resources. In contrast, age-appropriate placement demands from the system a higher commitment to meeting the education needs of individual children and it requires a high level of support.

Research and pragmatic observation indicate many students who are not promoted achieve still less in their second year in a grade. The negative effect on their self-esteem is more harmful than any supposed academic gain.

I have a study here of what caused stress among children. The top two concerns that caused stress were blindness and the death of a parent, and students rated grade retention as third most stressful.

Grade promotion also ignores the difference in maturation rates between individuals and between the sexes and is actively discriminatory to boys and to racial and ethnic minorities.

One of the social costs of grade promotion is that the lack of self-esteem caused by grade repetition is a major factor encouraging dropout. A grade promotion policy fosters in the public mind dangerous and simplistic notions about how people learn. Most important, it is a policy that ignores educational research and shows a lack of respect for the student as an individual and as a learner.

We believe grade promotion neither encourages students to remain in school nor is it any guarantee of raising standards. Although we recognize that such a policy would be approved by much of the public and would seem to meet some of the concerns of business and industry, we believe it creates only an illusion. It simply does not work.

We recommend that all students be placed in age-appropriate groupings up to and including grade 8 and that an enhanced staff adviser system, transition and booster programs and individual support mechanisms be provided to assist students who are having difficulty.

In conclusion, we believe the key issue for this committee is the degree to which the system reflects the rights and needs of the individual learner. The way to do this is not through a lockstep, rigid approach, but by providing individualized programs that honour and recognize diversity, flexibility and personal relationships.

Traditionally, educational change has followed wide swings of the opinion pendulum, but what is good for students is not always what is popular, political or trendy.

Now is the time for a more careful examination of what will best meet the needs of students and society. The solutions will be neither simple nor inexpensive to implement. The province needs to recognize that it costs more to provide individualized programs for students who come from a wide range of socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

One of the ironies is that as North York's needs increase, our provincial funding decreases; and that is something the province will have to address.

Madam Chairman: On that positive note, we will move into question period. It may well be like the real question period that we have, which is not a question and answer period; we just want to warn the members of that.

Mr. Reycraft: What is real about that?

Mr. Jackson: It is refreshing for opposition members to get answers to questions, though. I have to tell you, I love committee work.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Jackson, we would be more than happy to give you answers any time.

We have approximately 10 minutes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: First, let me say I think this is a superb brief: very clear, nicely laid out and very helpful to a committee that is trying to narrow its focus slightly on issues that are very broad and wide-ranging. It is very, very useful.

Some of the points you have made around semestering we have not seen made in the same fashion before. The multiple re-entry option, the mobility of families and all those kinds of things have not really been put forward as neatly, and I appreciate it very much.

I have two factual questions, if I could, rather than getting you to elaborate much more on matters, because I think your points are very clear. I want to know more about these studies. I want to know which study you have that says promotion data reveal that the dropout rate of students entering grade 9 at 15 is that much

higher, and the subsequent one showing that it is ameliorated in the second year or whatever. Is that the same study, and can we be directed to it? I would really like to see it.

1430

Mr. Marner: We could leave a fair bit of data with you. The first research was done within our own system, where we attempted to address the issue of dropouts. It was simply a compilation of looking back at the number of students who came into grade 9 overaged as compared to those who came in at 14, the normal age. In our system, and I think this would be reflected across the province, the dropout rate was three times higher, which is obviously very alarming.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: When was that done?

Mr. Marner: Last year. All of the other information which really questions the effectiveness of repeating a grade on the academic achievement of the youngster has been duplicated many times in North York and across North America. The North American system is about the only one in the developed world that repeats significant numbers of children. In Canada and the United States, the retention rate is about 15 per cent to 20 per cent; in western Europe and Japan, the retention rate is less than one per cent. There are several studies which I could leave with you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That would be great. That would be very helpful if you could. Do you know if any have done what you have done, which is to say done a study of their own system and found that statistic to be the case, then moved to the peer age grouping approach you have taken and looked at what happens after that? It might be that people would presume it was the bright 14-year-olds who are obviously staying and doing well rather than an age factor, if I can put it that way; that it is an IQ or ability question rather than a retention question.

Mr. Marner: Yes. There are several studies that look at that. There is one significant one, done in the United States. I would have to share with you the total results of it. They matched the children up with all of the factors: socioeconomic, ability, gender, home, preschool experiences and that sort of thing. Each child was matched. Half of the children were with their age group and the other half were held back. They were very careful not to repeat the same thing, but gave them modified programs to address their needs. The study showed that the children who moved with their age group scored significantly

higher two years later in both academic and social growth.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would really appreciate it if you could direct us to those studies. The other one I am interested in and would like some more comment on is the stress factor that was mentioned about retention. That was also new to me. I would be interested to hear a bit about where that came from.

Mr. Marner: Just very briefly, in our system, and I think it is probably true across North America, there is a tendency to look at very young children and, in our opinion, provide what the Radwanski report is suggesting, a very lockstep kind of approach which emphasizes mastery of learning, so that they do not move on until they have mastered it. Our experience would indicate that this is quite inappropriate for young children who are developmentally at very different levels.

For example, did you know that in Ontario children come into grade 1 at the age of six? The child who was born in January is at a significant advantage over the child who was born in December. We feel that we must look at the child's developmental level and then provide the appropriate program.

I think there is a trap we could fall into by listening to some of our critics who say that we would have a clear standard and then we would give those who were not ready for it extra remediation. Our experience indicates that if you remediate a primary child, you will be remediating a grade 10 child. It just does not work. Boys, who are developmentally probably about six months behind girls, are at a distinct disadvantage, particularly children whose first language is not English.

I think there is another myth, that people feel that retention may be questionable in that we do it too late. All the studies in North York, across Canada and in the United States indicate that 80 per cent of the children who lose one year lose it in grade 1 or 2.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is 80 per cent?

Mr. Marner: Yes, 70 to 80 per cent; and 40 per cent of the children who repeat do worse their second year. All of the studies indicate that the children who move on do academically better.

You asked about the social growth. When they have done comparison tests of how popular the children are with their classmates, the overaged children are always very low on the sociometric tests. There are very severe social things, which people tend to accept, but the research now indicates that the children suffer more academi-

cally than socially, although they are at a disadvantage in both ways.

We have set up a strategy in North York that identifies all of the overaged students. We are particularly concerned about children we receive from other boards in Ontario. If they are new Canadians or from outside the province, such as eastern Canada, and if they come in at age 10 and normally would go into grade 5, the practice is that the principals put them into grade 4 to see how they make out. What happens is that unless there are discipline problems, nobody ever checks again. The result is that they get into high school at too late a level. Unless a child is close to graduation by 17, they are very likely to drop out. We feel very strongly, as you can see from the brief.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Thanks, Mr. Johnston. We have only about five minutes left, and we have both Mr. Adams and Mr. Jackson, who indicate they have questions. Could you perhaps curtail them, since we do have our next presenter here and a full schedule this afternoon?

Mr. Adams: I was very impressed by the brief and your answers. It reflects very well on your board.

Mr. Filion, your figures on the ethnic background of the students and their families really are quite remarkable when you put them in that way. In the remainder of the brief, although you address the academic needs of those students, you do not mention the ethnic side again. Are you comfortable with that? For example, do you have a proactive hiring program for teachers? Have you thought about special training for teachers, heritage language programs and that kind of thing?

Mr. Filion: We have an affirmative action policy in hiring. We do have heritage language programs. While we are on this point, I could say we greatly welcome the students who come to us and who increase the cultural richness and the diversity in North York, which I think is very healthy. It is very different from when I was going to school in North York 20 to 25 years ago.

The problem it creates for us is the funding. One of the ironies is that as we become more cosmopolitan and urban—North York certainly has become that, as anybody who has driven by Yonge and Sheppard lately will know—we are penalized financially through the grant regulations. As our needs increase and as we become more urban and have more urban needs, we get less money to meet those needs. That is what our concern is.

As far as one of your earlier program questions is concerned, I think the director can answer it.

Mr. Kinzinger: With respect to the question regarding deliberately searching for teachers with different backgrounds and talents and so on, we have initiated this year, along with the faculty of education of the University of Toronto, what we call TAP, a teacher apprenticeship program.

Traditionally, over the past number of years anyway, it has required escalating percentages for entrance into the faculty of education. I believe it is around 81 per cent now for undergraduates to get into that program. We are of the opinion that there are a significant numbers of people who graduate with 78 per cent, 79 per cent and even 80 per cent marks who might just be worthwhile and wonderful teachers.

With the faculty, we have admitted 20 people this year. We have tried to select people with varying language skills from other backgrounds than might be traditionally the group that would be attracted to teaching, people from visible minorities and, believe it or not, men.

The essence of this program is that it is an apprenticeship program. If they work out well—they are working in our schools as teacher assistants—they will be granted automatic entrance into the faculty of education next year, even though they do not have 81 per cent. We try to go after people who can make a difference with our young people.

Mrs. O'Neill: Innovative again.

Madam Chairman: I think Mrs. O'Neill hit it on the head; it seems that North York is certainly innovative in many of the studies and the initiatives it has taken. We have a final question, by Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Jackson: Even in the municipal sector. I understand Howard Moscoe has come down here with some innovative thoughts for legislators as well, in a different forum.

Mr. Keyes: Sunday shopping. I remember that.

Mr. Jackson: I did not raise that issue.

1440

I am very pleased as well with your brief. It was quite fascinating. I am sorry that we do not have more time to have you explain in detail your proactive program for targeting appropriate age transition to the intermediate division. I will try to frame a question around that point with the understanding that you probably have some other strategies in place.

I would have thought that you would have intensified some of your guidance and booster

programs, as you refer to them—intensive and booster programs—in grades 7 and 8 as a result of your awareness. I get a sense that you are adjusting almost or trying to encourage an adjustment so that students are at a certain level in order to go into high school. Yet you are suggesting that for the booster and intensive programs, the transition focuses, be grades 9 and 10. Albeit you refer to it in the concept of semestering, but really we are talking about a more intensive examination in grades 9 and 10.

A lot of people have agreed with you, but based on your research and the fact you are running well ahead of many of the boards in this province, if not all the boards in the province, in terms of how you are tracking this thing, why did you not focus more on grades 7 and 8? Is there a reason for that? Can you comment? Do you get a sense of what my concern is?

Mr. Marner: Yes. It is interesting that you bring it out in that particular light.

I think the reason that we have not highlighted the booster program is that it is more of an integrated program as part of the regular classroom up until grade 9. At grade 9, when you begin to enter specific subject areas, the booster program becomes an add-on beyond the regular program. Through our elementary, junior high and middle schools, it is very much a regular part of the classroom operation.

For example, with our overaged students, most of whom are immigrant children, we target the children coming out of grade 6 into junior high, for example, or into middle school. We attempt to identify those who seem to have the ability to be performing at a much higher level, and we group them in certain schools into one class.

We sit down with the parents and the students and we indicate that they are one year behind and that they will have a better chance of graduating if we get them into high school on age. We give them a three-year program in two. We indicate there is going to be more homework and it is going to be a lot more work, but it is a lot of ego building.

The students have made tremendous gains academically and socially. At one junior high school, four students were honoured a couple of years ago for high academic achievement. Three of them had come through this two-in-one program. They give themselves interesting names like Seven Up and Crazy Eights, but there is a tremendous ego boost.

At the secondary school level, again we target students who we think could be university-bound

but have chosen to take courses that will not lead them to university. At Westview Centennial Secondary School, which is very multicultural, we have Project Advance where we identify the students. We go to the parents and the student and we say: "You have chosen mostly general-level or basic-level courses. We think you have the ability, with support, to do advanced-level programs." We put them together in, say, a grade 10 program with the intent of moving into grade 11, advanced. That is the sort of program it is.

Mr. Jackson: So my suspicions were correct that you really do have strategies to target pre-exit and then re-entrance.

Mr. Marner: That is right, but at the grades 7 and 8 level we would see that as a regular part of the daily classroom program.

Mr. Jackson: It seems logical, the manner in which you have approached the issue. You are to be commended. I just wonder if you, in any of the reports to your board, have committed to paper that kind of program and if we might have access to it because, in your interests of being brief, we have not seen much of it. I appreciate that you have handled it in the question, but I would like to read more about it.

Mr. Marner: We could provide that.

Mr. Jackson: I wish we had more time. This is superb.

Madam Chairman: Yes. I really agree. I do appreciate the North York Board of Education coming before us today and contributing to our committee. I suspect you may get phone calls from various members asking you for additional information.

The next presentation will be by the Grey County Board of Education. I understand this is a joint response not only from the three teachers' federations in Grey county but also from the supervisory officers, the principals and trustees.

Mr. Morgan: That is correct.

Madam Chairman: Welcome to our committee. We are glad to hear from Grey county. If you would like to begin by introducing yourself for the purposes of electronic Hansard, I would just mention that we have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation, which will also include time, we hope, for questions from the members. Please begin whenever you wish.

GREY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Morgan: Great. I am Jack Morgan and I am a superintendent of program for the Grey county board. On my right is Bill Prudham, who is the principal of John Diefenbaker Secondary

School in Hanover, and on my left, Earl Manners, who is the past president of District 23 of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

As you noted, Madam Chairman, this is indeed a joint brief. The various groups involved in the presentation were representative, we feel, of Grey county education, and they include, of course, the three federations as well as the principals' group, the supervisory officers' group and the trustees. I will begin, and we will share this responsibility.

As you can see from the table of contents, this is sort of a play in four acts buttressed on either end by a prologue and an epilogue. You may, in fact, by the time we are finished, assume it is a kind of morality play and that we are some sort of antiphonal chorus. The parts that you have in the play itself, you can decide.

Following North York is an interesting experience, of course, for those of us from Grey county. What you have here is a cry from the heart of a small county that is very proud of its education system and that asks this committee, and indeed this Legislature and this government, to celebrate with it all that is good in education. This is a proactive, optimistic statement about the present state of Ontario education and its future potential. It is a boast that we believe that we are doing and planning to do much in Grey county education that is very good. It is a plea to recognize the good things that are going on in our schools and to build on them for the good of our students, who are moving into a very complex, very bewildering but at the same time very challenging world.

In this brief, we have focused on what we consider to be the important issues in education and not simply on the mechanics and logistics of educational delivery. The brief provides many recommendations, which are summarized at the end, but the pith and substance of the brief is in the narrative, as it should be in any good work of literature. It is an account of our beliefs and practices, and we three, hesitating to sound like the witches in Macbeth, would like to take you briefly through the document. I underline "briefly." I will begin with the prologue.

The prologue simply underlines the fact that we are dealing with four important issues. We deal with the delivery system of education in Ontario, and specifically in Grey county—we are interested in education in Grey county primarily—with pedagogy, with the educator and with the curriculum. It provides a bit of background, as we see it from our county, of the society that we

are indeed living in, in Grey county as well as in North York.

It urges the committee particularly to keep in mind, and I think it urges all educators as well to keep in mind, the five simple but very realistic imperatives for better schools as they are listed in the final page of the prologue: Give room to teachers and students to work and learn in their own appropriate ways; insist that students clearly exhibit mastery of their schoolwork; get the incentives right for both students and teachers; focus the students' work on the use of their minds; and keep the supporting structure simple, but flexible. Act 1 in the play is the delivery system.

1450

Mr. Manners: Trustee representative Doreen Green and I were responsible for writing the first section of the response, entitled *The Delivery System*. Since you all have copies of the response, I would just like to highlight the main points presented under the three subtitles: "The Current Scene," "Short-term Goals" and "The Future."

As you might expect, the first section is mainly descriptive. However, I think two points need emphasis. The first one is that students in Grey county secondary schools have traditionally had a very high average credit per student ratio. In fact, the average student is taking 7.47 credits per year. That dramatically increases the students' opportunity for success over the course of their high school years.

Second, especially during the 1980s, the Grey County Board of Education and the district federation of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation have jointly promoted a number of new initiatives to respond to changing demands on education and to meet the needs of an increasingly varied public in Grey county. A number of those are mentioned, such as community learning centres and the Monitored Independent Learning and Partners in Education programs. I think our school in Owen Sound, West Hill Secondary School, was one of the first to get involved in that initiative in this province, as well as in co-operative education.

I think what becomes evident, as you read this first section, is that, on our own initiative, public educators in Grey have been responding to current social and political demands.

The second section, "Short-term Goals," concludes, after a review of the literature, that an effective environment, perhaps a student-teacher relationship in the learning environment, is

crucial and may be more important than wholesale changes to the delivery system.

The third section, "The Future," contains a number of proposals for field testing within professional, ethical and contractual considerations that we believe address the three main issues of semestering, streaming and the dropout rate. Semestering and, in particular, trimester or quartermaster systems, allow schools to be in operation for a full year and thus allow for more flexible entry for students. We believe that may be a direction to go.

We also believe that in order to cater to the whole community the ministry should fund as day school and for credit purposes an extended school day and thus eliminate the distinction between summer school, night school and day school.

Our third recommendation in this section is that a combination of core programming and rotary and a mastery approach to a set of learning objectives in the intermediate division does need some consideration. However, speaking for myself, I do not believe a completely heterogeneous grouping to be entirely possible because of the difficulty, I think, in establishing a set of learning outcomes that are at once realistic for students presently at the basic level and challenging enough for students who are now at the advanced level.

Fourth, we believe that, to promote a positive school-to-work transition, semester-length blocks of co-operative education at the general level, in particular in the senior division, should be considered. A comparative model to our proposal would be the co-op programs that have been developed by the University of Waterloo for its students—one semester in class and one semester at work.

Fifth, rather than extend a number of new initiatives among a number of overlapping ministries, it might be better for the student, who is probably inexperienced with the workings of various government agencies and departments, that the secondary school be the centre and focus for apprenticeship, upgrading programs, etc. and that it be developed in conjunction with business and industry.

Finally, and it is not really part of this section, any consideration of the educational system cannot be divorced from the economic and social systems schools work in. I was particularly influenced by something I read this summer, where Dr. Alan King is quoted as saying that a capitalist society driven by competition demands that schools determine which students are win-

ners and which are losers. In Ontario, kids have to be sorted, so we determine who gets the good life and who goes on to university and gets the high-paying jobs. Those who do not get all this get disenchanting pretty early.

Placing students of different abilities in the same class would only disguise the streaming that will inevitably continue. Once tested, the students who score poorly would be the same kids who do not perform well in the existing system.

If, as Dr. King says, streaming is inevitable and demanded by our society, perhaps what is at issue is not streaming but the number of avenues available for upward mobility within the streams. We believe our proposals address that very issue.

Mr. Morgan: To continue with the section on pedagogy, briefly, the section underlines our belief in the use of what is called a transactional approach to teaching, which forces students to interact in an experiential way, in a lively and dynamic way. We believe, as the "Current Practice" section of this particular chapter indicates, that we have made very real strides in that direction in a couple of areas that I would briefly draw to your attention.

One area, which at the present time is just in the primary division but is moving into the junior division, is what we are calling "seamless learning," which is the activity-based, activity-centred learning experience of the sort that students have learned to expect in kindergarten, essentially. Our belief is that that kind of movement throughout the grades, without the marked change from grade to grade, is an important step forward in the teaching of children.

The other current pedagogical practice that we feel particularly proud of, which is certainly not unique to our county, is the co-operative education program, which, at the present time, engages some 15 per cent of our secondary school students. It has been a phenomenal success and it puts students into an experiential learning situation relatively early; and much more important than simply that, it brings that experience back into the classroom so that the experience of the student in the workplace is valued, reflected upon and made use of, if you like, as a component of the pedagogy.

There are a number of short-term goals that we have set ourselves as a county, which are listed on pages 2.4 and 2.5 of the presentation. Certainly the most important one is the one that, in effect, I have already made mention of, and that is that our goal for the next few years is to

have all teachers move away from the delivery of a lockstep curriculum with a heavy emphasis on uniform and narrow tests towards a county-wide transactional model of education, and not just in the primary division.

We are looking to a change in assessment practices. We feel that we have a good deal of work to do in developing appropriate exhibitions of student mastery and developing compelling incentives for students using that theory. We realize that we have to be much more aware and we are now studying, as a board, individual learning styles and patterns of thinking.

We are looking at and working on a differentiated supervision model for the appraisal of professional teachers. The long-range goals in the area of pedagogy include the development of what we are calling a transformational model of pedagogy that addresses values issues more intensively than ever before.

We are looking at the inclusion, in our pedagogical considerations, of the theories of multiple intelligences, in the area of the secondary school particularly, and the co-operative education program, which is part of the secondary school program. This transformational extension of current co-operative education programs will be to take students beyond the acceptance of the status quo of the workplaces in which they are engaged.

The classroom component of the program will be used to question how students might alter the work possibilities open to them and how they might improve the current world of work to create a more desirable future. In other words, in that kind of pedagogy, we are talking about the empowerment of students to allow them to fashion their lives, to give them the wherewithal while they are in school to make appropriate decisions, to understand what is happening to them, and to empower them, therefore, to fashion better possibilities for themselves. We feel that education has that transformational component to it and we are working towards providing that in a pedagogical sense.

1500

Mr. Prudham: I am paraphrasing from section 3. We are advocating the concept of the teacher as an interactive professional, and we are now engaged in effective co-operative planning for program development, professional growth, the evaluation of program and student performance at the board level, involving teachers, administrators, formal federation representatives and trustees.

We are finding that the professional networking is a valuable strategy which decreases professional isolation, increases professional consultation and growth, and creates positive need for professional renewal.

We see needs in teacher pre-service. We see an immediate need in our county as an opportunity for more teachers in both of the panels to act as associate teachers through a program jointly sponsored by a faculty of education and the board.

As the Fullan-Connelly report recommends, there is a dire need for revamping and updating teacher pre-service education in Ontario. One example of a deficiency in current teacher training of secondary teachers is the limited exposure to the philosophy and the methodology of teaching students at the general and the basic levels.

The Grey county board's joint response to the Fullan-Connelly position paper emphasized the following points:

We need input from practising educators and we need provision of a teacher centre which would be in liaison with a faculty of education. We need inclusion of practising administrators and teachers, that is at local board level, on faculty admissions committees and input into the roles of associate teachers and student teachers in an internship setting.

We feel our most significant need in expanding in-service, however, is teacher time. We suggest that innovative teachers, recognized and accepted by their peers, can be granted a term responsibility for co-ordinating an area of curriculum development across the school system, and we need funding support to improve our existing approaches to in-service.

We believe that teacher education is a professional, lifelong process and there must be no tolerance for apathy or lethargy in the teaching profession. For beginning teachers, a program of induction and apprenticeship would be highly beneficial. These teachers need encouragement and peer support during the first few years of their teaching careers.

Further to the needs and addressing mentoring, we feel that mentoring must continue to grow and become an even larger part of our school program. We feel a mentor-teacher program must be available and implemented for beginning teachers or for teachers who are interested in change. We see the role of mentor-teacher reflecting recognized achievement within the profession. This concept will require considerable discussion with federation

groups if it is to be successful, and will certainly need effective government support in both dollars and political will.

We make the following recommendations regarding the role of the teacher. There are nine of them and perhaps I will just leave you for a moment to read them for yourselves.

Mr. Morgan: Continuing with, I guess, the final act, it is, as far as I am concerned at least, the most important one, the curriculum. That may simply be because that happens to be my particular responsibility.

It is most important, I think, when one is considering the secondary schools of the intermediate and senior divisions, because it certainly is in that area that teachers, educators, usually focus their attention when they are thinking about the intermediate and senior divisions. They focus their attention on curriculum, not on pedagogy, on the "what," not the "how."

This chapter suggests that the "how" is just as important a part of the curriculum in the secondary schools as the "what." I draw your attention to the third paragraph in that curriculum section, page 4.1. The student who, in a co-operative learning exercise, helps another student learn the Pythagorean theorem is not only providing that assistance to the other person; she is herself coming to a better understanding of the theorem, and if the exercise is structured well, learning about its application.

But she is also developing other skills and learning other techniques that may be more important to her and our survival in modern society than the Pythagorean theorem. She is learning sensitivity to the needs and idiosyncracies of others. She is learning to adapt to circumstances that she has not foreseen, to improvise. She is learning the importance of flexibility and tolerance. She is learning the art of communication.

As the next sentence says, increasingly, these affective, noncontent skills and techniques are becoming central to the curriculum and to the learning-teaching environment.

I would suggest, as the next paragraph says at the top of 4.2, that this process curriculum, as opposed to content curriculum, exists most obviously in our schools whenever students are involved in learning by showing or doing, by being actively engaged in a process that involves experimenting, communicating, analysing, choosing or judging as part of the skill or knowledge acquisition process. It exists when students are grouped to accomplish a task co-operatively; when they assist one another in

peer coaching or peer counselling; when they learn by doing in a co-operative education placement; when they use writing in any subject discipline as a means not just of articulating but of coming to understand the issue or the problem that is their focus; when their use of a microcomputer frees them from the drudgery of simple information acquisition and allows them the freedom to hypothesize, to alter, to combine, to play with possibilities and to access the information necessary to do these things quickly, and this process curriculum exists most obviously when students are actively involved in determining their own curriculum.

The second part of that curriculum chapter does deal, however, with the content, the traditional curriculum. It suggests at the bottom of page 4.2 that the decisions about what it is important to know must involve a societal consensus at the provincial level that is forward-looking, trenchant, based on sound research and as resistant as possible to special-interest political lobbying.

We say at the bottom of page 4.3 that if we can agree upon that content curriculum—I think we have to take the process curriculum as absolutely necessary—and that will not be easy, it follows that students should be called upon to demonstrate its mastery. I draw your attention to the last sentence on page 4.3. It is necessary to do this throughout the schooling years as an integral part of the curriculum; it is undoubtedly best done by the professionals closest to the learner, and in doing it, that is evaluating, ensuring that kids are accountable, we must avoid turning it into a sterile, standardized exercise.

1510

There are two more points on that chapter, on page 4.4, that I would like to draw to your attention. A single, monolithic school delivery system for all students is no longer possible. As Mr. Manners mentioned earlier, we have a number of alternative modes of delivery already under way in our county and are proud of them. Finally, schools become and are becoming not simply transmitters of knowledge and culture, but central catalytic elements in the social mix.

Finally, the epilogue: I draw your attention to three points only at the bottom of page 5.1. We believe as a county educational system that we have taken the initiative and are continuing to take it in preparing for the next century. We believe that in a public climate of traditional beliefs and values, we are, and we ask for your support in, challenging teaching traditions and curricula, providing leadership and managing

school change and creating opportunities for a broad base of teachers to be actively involved in curriculum design, implementation and assessment.

That leaves us a few minutes for questions, if you have any.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Morgan. I was afraid I was going to miss the end of the play there for a moment. We will start with Mrs. O'Neill.

Mrs. O'Neill: Your legislative member has arrived. I think he certainly can be proud of your presentation. I would like you to take my congratulations back to Mrs. Wright for the new responsibility she assumed on the weekend.

Mr. Morgan: Thank you. I will do that.

Mrs. O'Neill: I am sure you will have to put her on loan often when you will want her around Grey, but I think she will make an excellent contribution.

Mr. Morgan: I believe she is on loan today. That is why she is not here.

Mrs. O'Neill: I really enjoyed your brief. I may say as a compliment before I begin that you are looking to helping your students become thinkers. I have a feeling there are some pretty thinking educators in Grey. The presentation provides a lot of new ideas, new ways of expressing maybe old ideas, and I am very happy with what you have put before us.

I would like you to say a few more things about something early on in the brief at page 1.4 where you talked about the extended school day. Not having a lot of experience with rural environments, I would like to know whether that has something to do with this idea, or is it just to make life more convenient for any student anywhere in the province? Could you tell us a little more about what you mean by that, or why you think that is a good idea.

Mr. Manners: I do not think it is specific to Grey county and a rural environment. It is something that is probably good for all of Ontario. I think more and more citizens of Ontario are wanting to come back to upgrade their skills, whether for work or for their own personal self-satisfaction. Our schools are becoming the focus of life-long learning. To have courses available not just between nine and four o'clock but also into the evening, funded and supported in the same manner as day school, I think is becoming a necessity.

Mrs. O'Neill: I guess I misunderstood, then. I was thinking of you beginning the school day at

nine and going right through till six or something, but yours is a much broader—

Mr. Manners: It could go from nine till 11. Indeed, it could go from nine till six o'clock, if that were appropriate for that particular—

Mrs. O'Neill: It is more tied to funding than logistics of timing, in what you are saying.

Mr. Manners: Yes.

Mr. Morgan: May I feed into that? I think we are particularly sensitive to it because we have an extremely active continuing education program in the county, which I suppose is surprising given the fact that it is a rural county and consists of far-flung communities. It is not as easy as it might be in North York, for instance, to provide a very active adult program in a few centres. We have to provide them and do provide them in some 16 centres around the county. I guess we are particularly sensitive to the need for ongoing education, for life-long education.

At present, we are providing alternative education; that is, credit education for adults in three satellite secondary schools. We are calling them community learning centres, but their focus—

Mrs. O'Neill: Is that daytime or evening?

Mr. Morgan: It is daytime at the present, but we would certainly like to be able to have those schools going when the clients for them are available. We hope the funding would be appropriate to our needs in order to do that, which of course at the present time it is not.

Mrs. O'Neill: Okay. If I may go to the last point on that page 2 then, you mentioned this interesting idea, apprenticeship and upgrading being connected to the secondary schools. There are, I understand, two experimental or pilot projects in the province at the present time. Have you made any moves to do that on a more formal basis or is this still at the very elementary, thinking stages?

Mr. Manners: I know that our technical wings are involved in the linkage program with industries in and around Grey county.

Mrs. O'Neill: That is interesting, because that is a program that seems not to have been taken up with the enthusiasm we might have hoped.

Mr. Manners: They are working quite successfully in Grey county. Also, there are extensive discussions going on between businesses in Owen Sound and, in particular, the high schools. In fact, I think there is a suggestion, and I think it is still at the discussion stage, about providing some upgrading for workers at the

Monroe shock absorber plant in Owen Sound, which happens to be also a partner with West Hill Secondary School in the Owen Sound community as well.

Mrs. O'Neill: No doubt you will be watching these two experimental programs very closely. Thank you very much. I guess I am a little prejudiced because I had my very first day of teaching in the old Durham high school. Maybe that is what has made me very attentive to your brief.

Madam Chairman: Mrs. O'Neill, we know you would never be prejudiced. You might be biased, but never prejudiced.

Mrs. O'Neill: You might be right.

Madam Chairman: I just want that clearly on the record. I would like to very much thank the Grey County Board of Education for its appearance before us today and for some of its innovative thoughts of its own. After North York, it was also refreshing to hear some of your ideas.

Mr. Morgan: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Our next presentation will be by the Niagara Peninsula Industry-Education Council. Could you come forward, please.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: On a point of order, Madam Chairman: Radio-Canada was here wanting to do a followup on something that is being done in Scarborough. Apparently, the Scarborough Board of Education, in the last couple of days, has been holding meetings with ministry officials, within the board and in all the schools, around dropouts, and hopefully, today will be producing a whole number of recommendations from this conference it has been holding. I am wondering if we might try to see if we can get hold, from the board of education, of any information coming out of this little conference it has held that might be useful to us.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for that point of information. I think that would be an excellent idea. Perhaps we could leave that with either the clerk or the research office and someone could gather that information for us.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I trust them both implicitly.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for that vote of confidence. Now, back to the Niagara Peninsula Industry-Education Council. Welcome to our committee.

Mr. Porter: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: We have allocated one half-hour for your presentation. That includes time for both your oral presentation and members' questions. We hope you will leave plenty of time for the latter.

Mr. Porter: We have a target on splitting that time approximately half and half.

Madam Chairman: That is perfect. Please begin whenever you are ready. Would you just start by introducing yourself for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

NIAGARA PENINSULA INDUSTRY-EDUCATION COUNCIL

Mr. Porter: It is a privilege and a pleasure to be able to spend this brief time with you this afternoon. I would like, first, to introduce myself and my colleague to my left.

My name is Dave Porter. I am the chairman of the Niagara Peninsula Industry-Education Council. I participate in that organization from the perspective not of an educator but as a participant in industry and business. My involvement in that and my focus began as a result of being a human resource practitioner for a number of years and a consumer of the byproduct of the education industry. I was, from time to time, a reasonably vocal critic on the shortcomings of the product I was receiving, and the opportunity was afforded me to participate, in part, in the process; hence, my interest and the reason we are here today.

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My colleague to my left is David Wiebe. David is the executive director of our council, one of our staff members who spends his full time in the pursuit of council business.

When I am not involved in council business, I fulfil the role of vice-president of administration of Atlas Specialty Steels, which is Canada's largest specialty steel producer, located in Welland, Ontario. I have been in that position for some time and have been involved in issues similar to this in the area.

Our purpose here this afternoon is to make you aware and present to you the role that we feel industry-education councils can play in the four subject areas relative to today's discussion and to offer ourselves as at least an initial example of how these projects might work. Our presentation will be split between myself and Mr. Wiebe.

The Niagara Peninsula Industry-Education Council is a nonprofit corporation that was organized approximately one year ago to assist schools to match the resources of their community with the needs of the teachers and the students. It is hoped that this process will facilitate the

transition of youth from school to work. Really, that transition is the purpose for our existence.

The initial stages of our development were co-ordinated through the efforts of all four boards of education in the Niagara Peninsula, being two public and two separate boards, in co-operation with business, industry and labour representatives.

This committee received a submission in its earlier efforts from Mr. Wiebe, the executive director. In that document, he outlined the role of the industry-education council and how our objectives relate to the philosophy of education. He went on to state, on behalf of all existing industry-education councils in the province, of which there are several now, that co-operation and collaboration between industry and education can assist in attaining the goals established by the Ministry of Education throughout Ontario. In that package will be our annual report, which highlights some of the things we will touch on this afternoon in more detail.

Our objectives are several-fold: to stimulate and support career education; to focus community and school resources on career education needs; to help students to make better career decisions; to facilitate the transition of youth from the world of school to the world of work; to increase school and community understanding, co-operation and collaboration; to develop an awareness of the vast number of occupations which exist in our particular community in the Niagara Peninsula, and to assist students in identifying their own interests and aptitudes relative to specific occupation clusters.

Industry-education councils work to develop a co-operative relationship between business/industry, government and labour. Why? It is our view that all of these groups play a significant role in the future of students. They are shaping and determining the nature of the real world, and career education must bring that real world to the student to facilitate sound career decisions. Career education by its very nature is dependent upon linking the community and the school into a unified career preparation process. We suggest career education, by its very name, bridges the classroom and the workplace, to fulfil the expectation of that name in its practical application.

Our submission is prepared in consultation with and support of the superintendents of all four boards of education in the Niagara Peninsula. They support not only the content of our comments, but also the concept of industry-education councils and the benefit of such

expanding initiatives throughout the province, as indicated by their support and participation in our council.

Councils are dedicated to the task of improving the liaison between industry/business and organized labour and our school systems. The promotion and fulfilment of this task can and must be an intricate part of the educational process in Ontario.

The success of the industry-education council concept depends on the willingness of the partners to provide funds and support on an ongoing basis, and that includes the fourth partner, government. It is our hope that this select committee will recommend to the government the creation of a new program that will provide needed funds to do two things: first, to continue the programs being delivered by successful industry-education councils; and, second, to promote any new programs that exhibit co-operation among boards of education, industries and businesses, labour and/or government.

I will call on Dave Wiebe now to comment specifically on the four subject areas before the committee.

Mr. Wiebe: The four components of the education system presently being studied by the select committee are so interrelated that it is difficult to discuss one without involving the other three. We plan to deal with the four areas you are studying in relation to the contribution that the business and the industry communities have to offer to the education process, not only in the Niagara Peninsula but throughout Ontario.

Let me just begin by making some general comments about the present structure of secondary school education in Ontario.

The diploma requirements under OSIS are a modification of a structure that continues to serve traditional academic preparation. There is a tendency to treat all students the same in terms of curricular approaches, educational structure, cross-curricular goals, etc. This structure streams students into levels of ability that result in differences being reflected in the quality of their educational experiences rather than in real differences in their learning styles, career aspirations and educational directions.

OSIS has led as well to the proliferation of semestering, a structure that is not necessarily best for all students and the subjects they are required to take. OSIS attempts to bring about a consistency in the quality of the education system through making the process common. The mandatory credits that must be attained in grades 9 and 10 in order for students to proceed to the

senior levels prevent students from experiencing work-related activities and forces them to consider, possibly too early, future career directions. These strict requirements leave little time for students to learn life skills that will develop the essential interpersonal skills and self-motivation that employers are seeking. It forces them to make career decisions before they understand the process of decision-making.

The existing streaming model is probably already filtering down into the grades 7 and 8 programs and is forcing students to make decisions by default instead of pursuing the careers of their choice.

There tends to be an internal contradiction in the OSIS document, and that internal conflict is between the goal of the preparation of youth for employment and the increased amount of structure created through higher numbers of compulsory and total credits required to graduate. Although the stated goals of OSIS regarding the preparation for the world of work are good, the lack of flexibility does not meet the needs of students to establish goals within their own abilities and interests. Consistency in quality of education can better be attained through well-defined and measured student outcomes, while allowing for different paths for students to attain these outcomes.

There is a need, we believe, for an unstreamed program for grade 9 and 10 students that is not fettered by the credit system—a time of flexibility, exploration, attitude and genuine skill development that could be followed in the senior division by programs that allow for a flexibly designed credit system that makes preparation for work activities as legitimate as academic activities. After all, these two activities are inextricably entwined.

Grade promotion is not an acceptable alternative. Grades 7 through 10 should have identified end products towards which students proceed continuously.

This committee should consider the introduction of streams for students at various learning levels after they have had an opportunity to consider and become aware of their own abilities in the first two years of secondary school. Among other advantages, this grants the student a greater responsibility for the direction of his or her own academic path.

The development of specific programs that include work experience and a possible introduction to the co-op program not tied to the compulsory credit system, are aimed at the learning level, interests and talents of the

students in the various levels of education, will result in students who are comfortable, confident and experienced in their career direction.

In consultation with the business community, it may be possible to establish an external evaluation device that determines a student's readiness to proceed to the various programs at the senior level. This different type of testing system may allow students to choose specific subject areas that lead to future employment requirements instead of being compelled to take specific compulsory subjects that may not be useful to them or to their employers.

This sort of evaluation device would also allow the students' competency in subject areas to be evaluated by the most current standards, the standards to which they will shortly be required to apply the subject areas, the standards of the world of work, the business and industry community. We believe the business and industry community is prepared to assist in the development of an external measuring device that could be used for monitoring the quality and consistency of these programs.

1530

Mr. Porter: If I can, for a moment now, I would like to talk about the role of the industry-education councils. We feel it is a very important role that the councils can and must play in the educational process, for example, in the development of a liaison in an environment such as the one which would be required to implement the suggestions just mentioned by Mr. Wiebe.

Education systems are designed to prepare students for the world of work, whether directly from secondary school or after a period of post-secondary education or training. This preparation period requires open, meaningful and ongoing dialogue between the education community and the business community, which would include labour, industry and other organizations that can contribute to the overall process.

If our education system is truly to prepare our youth for the demands of the world of tomorrow, there is a need for educators to be aware of the constantly changing workplace and for employers to understand the realities of public education, human growth and development. This interaction must encompass more than discussions held during forums where information is exchanged and criticisms are voiced. It requires a truly positive and participatory partnership that involves the sharing of the responsibilities and resources that each of the partners have.

Industry-education councils can fulfil this role and should be supported, we feel, financially,

and this should be reflected in similar partnership projects among the many ministries of the provincial government. It also requires a commitment of the agencies and the departments within the federal government. It requires support from the private sector by supplying the human resources and monetary contributions because, in the end result, it will satisfy the needs of the students in the education system, the needs of the employers who consume these products and those of our community at large.

There are a number of initiatives that the Niagara Peninsula Industry-Education Council is presently pursuing that we feel would contribute to the development of the spirit of co-operation between the partners. It is difficult, as a result of time, to go through all of these initiatives, but I would like to point out a couple of them.

In view of a teacher-internship program in the existing structure of education of Ontario, the summer months provide a good opportunity for teachers to become involved in a program that will keep them up to date with the rapid changes in business and industry. During a two- to six-week work experience period, teachers would have an opportunity: (1) to be exposed to a variety of work settings and involvements; (2) to gain knowledge of job responsibilities and job requirements, especially in entry-level positions; (3) to learn about job selection and the job interview process; (4) to talk to employers at their job sites about the decisions leading to career choices and the educational skill requirements necessary in appropriate organizations; and (5) to speak with management and supervisors about entry-level job opportunities, skills, evaluation systems and advancement opportunities and career paths in terms of future needs.

Educators involved in this project could receive a monetary incentive to encourage them to consider this program and become better prepared to discuss careers with their students when they get back into the classroom.

Benefits of the program could include: (1) a progressively larger group of educators becoming knowledgeable about the current business world and its requirements; (2) a new and expanded understanding within the business world regarding responsibilities and obstacles that educators must handle within their system; (3) the increased availability of career information for students on a feedback basis, especially about entry-level positions and about the work process and the realities of that world of work; (4) the development of a more relevant curriculum that would facilitate the transition from school to

work; and (5) the creation of a workforce of tomorrow that is better prepared and more in touch with the world in which they are competing.

The establishment and proliferation of career information centres is another project or technique that we feel would help achieve these ends. The art of career planning and progression is largely that of being aware of one's own options and of keeping them open, as well as monitoring the change both within oneself and in the world of work that one intends to participate in. Far too many people think of a career as something one does at any given time, but it should be a dynamic concept involving creative change from one stage of experience to another.

Madam Chairman: I want to mention to you that there are approximately 10 minutes left in the presentation time. You might wish to consider highlighting the remaining pages so that there is some time for questions.

Mr. Porter: Thank you very much. Niagara Peninsula at this time is initiating four career information centres available to all students of all boards in the peninsula, which would provide them with the general information they need to make these informed decisions.

Another program we have been involved in and would endorse is a partnership program in which, as we heard in the presentation before ours, industries and businesses are twinned or involved in an adoption with schools and there are several programs involving the frank exchange of information between members of business and the workforce and educators as well as students.

In an effort to provide us with an opportunity to deal with questions, if there are any, we would close in strongly encouraging this committee to acknowledge and endorse the value of the industry-education council concept in Ontario and the sorts of programs which councils can be involved in developing and implementing, the value of the relationship and the co-operation between educators, government, business and labour in the sorts of benefits that relationship could yield to our students.

We were closing with a Charles Dickens quotation about the best of times and the worst of times and making the brief analogy that in what may be some of the dilemmas of today's education system are opportunities, opportunities which we feel—certainly things yielding out of the industry-education council concept—could have tremendous value for our students.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

Mr. Jackson: David and David, welcome. Thank you for your brief. I am familiar with your work in the peninsula. It has represented some leadership work for other programs in this province. I would like to have asked—this is a backward way to ask a question—a question of the Grey County Board of Education, which made a recommendation, and I would like to get your response to it.

Mrs. O'Neill: I was going to do that yesterday, but I did not have the nerve.

Mr. Jackson: Their recommendation was: "That more students be allowed to leave school before graduation without stigma, and less emphasis be placed on academic accreditation for direct job entry and that differentiated diplomas for differentiated levels of mastery be provided." Would you like to react to that?

Mr. Wiebe: I am not sure I want to deal with it. It seems to me that is one of the areas on which educators are concentrating some of their efforts. I believe the business community thinks it is essential that there are academic subjects the students have to master. I think they are saying that some of the work experience and opportunities to interact with the business community are as important for some students, more important for some students, than to attain some of the goals of having a diploma by the time you are finished a certain level of education.

I think it is important for us to have that open type of concept that allows people to progress at their own level in their own areas because you may have a student who is presently identified as someone being in the advanced level, who everybody thinks should go off into university or college, who maybe should go off into an apprenticeship or some type of work experience, because that is where he will find job satisfaction.

Mr. Jackson: I thought it was the kind of recommendation you would embrace, given some of the other issues that have been raised. One of the doctorate in education individuals from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education indicated that the pressure on the business community is literally sucking students out of our schools and that there has to be more flexibility in how we approach the concept of being out of school, whether it is for co-op education or pre-apprenticeship training, which is partially done at high school and partially done on work site.

That leads me to my next very brief question: What have you been able to achieve in terms of bringing to the council table through working

with the federal manpower agencies and the provincial skills development people, in terms of apprenticeship linkages in our high schools, and some of the labour difficulties associated with that? It is a tall order, but I thought I would see more in your brief on that area and I did not, even if you had set it out as a challenge. You did make one reference to the federal people.

1540

Mr. Wiebe: We have not done much with the provincial ministries regarding skills development, but we are a very new organization; we are around about a year and three months. The first half-year was trying to get more organized. However, we are using some of the federal government agencies to do some of the job entry and job re-entry programs for social assistance recipients.

In fact, we will be announcing this week in the peninsula a program and financial support from the federal government to deliver those training programs, the learning as a life-long process concept to the tune of \$1 million-odd the federal government is supplying for that program, which we are delivering, or at least co-ordinating and managing, as an industry-education council. It ends up being a division of our council. We are growing a little too quickly, however.

The other area we are getting federal support on is the development of career information centres we made reference to. They have given us a grant of approximately \$250,000 to start up four career information centres. It has never been done before in the province, where there is not only a facility being shared between the public and separate school boards, but where there are students from both systems going into one centre. We are now sharing a program with the public and separate schools, which I do not believe has been done in Ontario before.

Mr. Jackson: That would have been a question, as to who is financing that. That was the part that intrigued me, but who is providing the manpower supervision? You quote some individuals as being assigned to those centres.

Mr. Wiebe: The development of the counselors for those centres is being paid for by the grant. The boards of education are picking up the cost to supply the facilities. In most cases, it has been part of the facilities they have, a room in the school or one of the boards has rented commercial space at a cost of \$20,000 per year. They are supplying the program supervisor costs and all of the other costs required to run it. That is probably a contribution of close to \$60,000 or \$70,000 per year for each centre.

Mrs. O'Neill: Just to pick up on that point, I hope you will somehow get that out in whatever trade magazines you have access to or whatever, because I know there are other career information centres in the province and somehow the board that founded them holds on to them very jealously. I think what you have done is exemplary and I hope you will spread the good word, so to speak.

I have also had some very minor and fringe experience with this teacher internship program you challenge us with. Have you been able to put that into practice at all? Have you got teachers who are able to do this, for instance, beyond summer? You suggest summer, it seems, if I am reading correctly, because there seems to be a lot of hesitancy with collective agreements and paying people if they are on sabbatical or even if they are on leave of absence. Have you been able to work yourself through that? I am sure there are teachers who want to do this and I am sure there are people like you who want to offer it. To me, it is a cornerstone of good co-operative education and preparation for work for our students.

Mr. Wiebe: We have not been able to get it off the ground yet. We made a proposal to the Ministry of Education through Tom Tidey, requesting some financial assistance that would provide the incentive to have these teachers become involved in a program in the summer. We have had a negative response to that request. We have continued to pursue it and we have used the provincial politicians in our area to try to encourage some more investigations of the possibility.

We think it is a very exciting program. We became aware of it in Rochester, where it works very well. In fact, they cannot accommodate all the teachers who would like to do it. We will still pursue it, but we certainly cannot do it without some type of assistance from either the government or some other organization that could provide it.

Mrs. O'Neill: Did you have any input into the technical review?

Mr. Wiebe: No.

Mrs. O'Neill: You did not. Okay. This is certainly a very good suggestion. You have not done anything regarding school year internship with teachers? You have not approached your boards on that kind of a program?

Mr. Wiebe: No, we have not.

Mrs. O'Neill: Have you approached your individual boards to help with funding this kind

of thing, setting up a joint summer school, for instance?

Mr. Wiebe: No, we have not done that either. At the present time, the funds to operate the council come from the ties to business and industry incentives funds provided by the Ministry of Education, plus support from the four boards of education and whatever funds we have been able to raise from the private sector, approximately \$20,000 in the first year, which we thought was pretty good.

However, since the funding stops now—we have received all the funds from the provincial government we are going to receive as seed funds—we will be looking to the boards or other funding sources to provide ongoing funds to allow the council to operate, which means that rather than a \$5,500 contribution in the first and second years of operation, the boards will have to look carefully at going to \$35,000 or \$40,000, whatever we convince them is good. We have not gone to them to ask for additional funds, because they are all talking about tight budgets and reducing their cost as it is, so we have not approached them with it.

Mrs. O'Neill: I have one final question. Do the boards of education have members who sit on your board?

Mr. Wiebe: Yes.

Mrs. O'Neill: I hope you will be able to get the commitment from them. I am sure they must be beginning to reap the benefits. Please keep trying. I think you have a very good idea.

Mr. Jackson: Mrs. O'Neill is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education (Mr. Ward), so it comes highly recommended.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Wiebe and Mr. Porter. We appreciate your coming before our committee today.

Our next presentation will be by the Provincial Save Our Schools Coalition, Dianne Austin. Good afternoon. As you are setting up your presentation, I will just comment on the spelling of your first name. It makes it very easy for the clerk and Hansard when it has the notable characteristic that it is spelled properly. The rest of the committee are looking very puzzled, but for those of us who find it difficult to get two Ns in Dianne, it is very significant.

Welcome to our committee. We have allocated one half-hour for your presentation and hope that you will allow time for members' questions, because we have very inquisitive members. Begin whenever you wish.

PROVINCIAL SAVE OUR SCHOOLS COALITION

Mrs. Austin: Thank you. Fundamental changes are taking place in many of Ontario's boards of education. These changes seem minor when taken individually, but when considered collectively they threaten the very fabric of the educational system. The change I speak of is the systematic closure of small community schools.

In this paper I will attempt to show that Ontario's small schools are not only viable, but in fact may be a preferred alternative form of education. I will show that we are losing these schools through directed efforts of the Ministry of Education and, finally, I will discuss how this trend is alienating even further parents and perhaps even the teachers involved in our school system.

Dr. David Marshall, in his address to the Small Schools Conference 1984, presented a list of the benefits of small schools, which include the following: enhanced potential for individualized instruction; closer relations between teachers and students; smaller teacher-pupil ratio; better opportunity for learner-centred atmosphere and programs; close relations between faculty and administration; more participation in decision-making by the teachers and the students; greater sense of community and school loyalty; greater opportunity for students to discover and develop their uniqueness and individual abilities; clear expectation that guidance become a function of every staff member; better relations among teachers, closer teacher-parent relations; more parent involvement with the school and more human contact, reducing frustration and alienation and improving morale of both students and school staff.

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As well as Dr. Marshall's extensive writings on small schools, there are numerous other educators who have researched the topic. We have accumulated a dossier of 60 papers that affirm the value of these community schools.

Hand in hand with the closure of schools is the increased need for busing. This is one of the main sources of anxiety for parents. Research conducted by the University of Aberdeen shows that as many as one child in three suffers from some form of trauma through busing. In rural areas there will always be a need for some form of public transport, but with the closure of community schools and the redirection of children to more distant locations, the problems become compounded.

One criticism of small schools frequently presented is the presence of the multigraded classroom. Some people perceive this to be a retrograde step back to the country schoolhouse, yet several boards of education have recently reintroduced this form of teaching into their system, for example, Durham, East York and York, and report very positive results. The Durham Board of Education, in its evaluation report on multiaged grouping, stated:

"The organization is vertical rather than horizontal which creates a greater acceptance of individual differences and lessens the anxiety of peer comparison. Grade division becomes fluid since any child can be working at any one of the developmental levels. A more flexible ability grouping allowing increased small group instruction, coupled with students remaining with the same teacher(s) for two or more years, allows for a deeper insight and understanding of each child and family."

In recognizing the value of multigraded classroom settings, the Durham Board of Education has committed itself to providing its teachers with professional development. They also make sure that the teachers involved in the multigraded classrooms share an educational philosophy compatible with and supportive of such settings.

Ontario's small schools provide a high quality of education while meeting the needs of parents and their communities. Unfortunately, in the years 1984 to 1986, 56 small schools have been closed in Ontario. I refer to schools with from one teacher per school up to 10 teachers. Add to this number five elementary schools designated for closure in Victoria county, six elementary schools and one high school in Thunder Bay, one school in the city of Kitchener, one school in Ottawa and another on Manitoulin Island, to name a few, and you begin to arrive at the overall picture.

We are losing our small schools due to a deliberate policy of the Ministry of Education, a misguided policy that provides funds only for the construction of large elementary schools, a policy which strives to maximize the economy of the system rather than quality of education. Representatives of the Ministry of Education have been quoted by the press regarding its position on the construction of new schools.

One such quote by a ministry official stated that, "The ministry is not approving grants for building small schools." She further stated that: "There are very few funds available for renovation and those funds that are available could only be used for renovations to the fabric of the

building, i.e., roof repairs, boiler repairs. There would be no money for the addition of a gymnasium, a library or a kindergarten."

Without support from the ministry to upgrade existing small schools, boards of education are left with very few options. It is of interest to note that in the same time frame 56 small schools were closed, 44 schools with enrolments of approximately 500 students were opened. Coincidence or ministry design? A recent article in the *Toronto Star* stated that educators and education ministry officials say that over the next decade the schools will be more receptive and open to parents and the community. The closure of community schools results in the opposite happening:

"There is a lessening of the potential of both students and ratepayers to participate in the various facets of the school's programs and services; there is a disruption in the stability of the community and the educational system; alienation of ratepayers; the systematic eroding of neighbourhood, community schools and community education, and the reduction of parental participation in the education of their children."

In my own small community, local parents go into the school on a regular basis and work alongside the teachers. They provide extra activities to the children, such as instruction on cooking, sewing, remedial reading, pottery, etc. The senior citizens are involved, and one man taught the children woodworking. On Remembrance Day the local veterans march the children to the cenotaph and provide a personal, meaningful service.

When a community school closes, there is less opportunity for parents to interact with the teachers who are educating their children. The teachers become strangers who work in the big centres rather than neighbours within the community. It is no longer easy for parents to do volunteer work in the classrooms and the identity of the children from within the community is lost. These are but a few of the costs involved with the loss of community schools.

At this point, I wish to add a few comments that are not included in my original submission.

The Provincial Save Our Schools Coalition was formed when community groups from across the province, fighting the closure of their neighbourhood community schools, began comparing their situations. The trend in the majority of the closures taking place was that very little or no parental participation in the decision-making process was allowed by the boards. As well, several boards were clearly contravening

section 183 of the Education Act, the section that specifies when boards can exclude the public from meetings.

By the ministry's own admission, violations have occurred. However, when the Ministry of Education was pressed to intercede on behalf of the parents, the response from the deputy minister, Dr. Shapiro, was: "The ministry does not enforce this legislation where there are means for persons who feel they have been improperly dealt with to seek redress. The ministry does, of course, expect that there will be compliance with its legislation." Dr. Shapiro suggested that this form of redress would be through the court system.

The fact that the ministry is taking a hands-off position regarding contraventions is encouraging boards to continue such practices. The ministry must be compelled to enforce its legislation. The refusal to intercede and ensure that discussions regarding school closures are conducted within open session denies parents the right to advocate for a school organization plan that best meets the needs of their children and the community.

The positive qualities brought to a child's education by a small school setting are worth preserving. This philosophy of education, one which recognizes the importance and value of the interaction among the students, teachers, parents and the community, is fundamental to quality education.

The Ministry of Education must recognize the educational value of small schools and support them through its policies and funding mechanisms. They must recognize and commit themselves to the neighbourhood, community school, community education and community participation concepts. There is nothing more important than the delivery of quality education to our children. Thank you.

The Vice-Chairman: Thank you, Dianne. Before I go to questions from members, I wonder if I could ask you to tell us a little bit about the coalition, its membership and the length of time it has been in existence.

Mrs. Austin: It was formed in August 1987, as a result of my becoming involved in my own local situation. Just through the media, I became aware of other situations and then we did a mailer to all the newspapers in Ontario asking for information about other school closures and got contact people that way, and it just sort of grew from there. We have been in touch with over 30 areas across the province. We keep in constant contact, but we do not have people

coming for meetings because of the distance involved and the cost.

The Vice-Chairman: Do you know how large your membership is now?

Mrs. Austin: I cannot give you a number, just areas. I have been in touch with Thunder Bay and Manitoulin and Simcoe and Lucknow and—

Mr. Jackson: Halton.

Mrs. Austin: —Halton, there were three schools there. There were three schools in Ottawa, six in Thunder Bay that are designated; Victoria county, Haliburton county, Durham county, just to name a few.

The Vice-Chairman: We have had a few closures in southwestern Ontario too. You might—

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Mrs. Austin: Yes. It is sort of spreading by word of mouth. Quite often they will contact someone, and they have heard through us. What we do for groups that contact us is provide them with research material so that they can make presentations to their boards. As well, we have been making briefs to boards of education that are contemplating a closure.

I am the first one to say that you cannot preserve all small schools, but it is a philosophy that is being ignored by boards of education, quite often because of the funding mechanisms that are available.

Mr. Keyes: Appendix A, just so I am clear, shows the number of schools that existed in 1984 that still were just one-teacher schools, the number in 1985 and 1986, and the number closed.

Mrs. Austin: Correct.

Mr. Keyes: I guess the line that you have highlighted at the very end of your brief is one that is very important to all members here and the ministry: "There is nothing more important than the delivery of quality education to our children." It all hinges, of course, on the definition and the person looking at that phrase. What is quality education?

I grew up and went to a one-room school. I taught in them and the rest of it. We felt we had quality education, because that rested with the teacher to a large extent. You cannot say that a big school provides quality education, nor can you say that a small school automatically provides quality education. It depends on many factors, the teacher being one of them, but

surely opportunity for alternatives or flexibility is also important.

I suggest that one of the problems you run into in trying to maintain small schools is the desire on the part of students and parents to have almost as wide an access to a variety of programming in those communities as they do in larger ones. How can we be fiscally responsible to provide that? How can you provide, in a small high school of 125, the wide range of programs, for heritage language perhaps, of a composite high school with the shops and all the other programs?

How can you really feasibly do that and still be fiscally responsible? I think this is the catch that you find yourself in. What level will the community accept, by way of much less access to choice, and still maintain the small school?

Mrs. Austin: I think it is exactly what you said. What the community chooses, as a community, is what suffices for its children: whether the community is satisfied with the level of education its children are getting. Sometimes the advantages that are preserved in a small school outweigh some of the advantages in a large school. There are advantages and disadvantages to both systems. A lot of research shows that there is no significant saving financially by closing schools.

Mr. Keyes: Do you direct most of your emphasis in the coalition towards the elementary school level or the high school level?

Mrs. Austin: Mainly it is the elementary level. There is a newsletter that is published by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and it deals mainly with small secondary schools. We have had an article published with them. They deal mainly with curriculum and how it can be provided in a smaller high school setting as effectively as it is in the larger schools.

Mr. Keyes: When you get into the high school, when you say it is what the community and, in essence, the parents decide, I have a feeling that the students should be much more considered and involved in that decision-making. At an elementary level, it is much more practical perhaps for the parents to decide whether they are satisfied with it.

Mrs. Austin: I have had contact with only one high school. All the rest are elementary schools. In my own location, we are talking junior kindergarten to grade 8 schools, and our board is proposing to close five.

Mr. Keyes: You quickly made reference that you would be the first one to admit that not all schools should remain open. What is the basic criterion or philosophy that you use yourself, or in the coalition, to look at whether it would be appropriate that a school closes or stays open?

Mrs. Austin: You have to work along with the board of education and the parents; sit down and make that decision together. There is research material which supports that with 20 students in a school you can still provide a viable program. There was one situation where they were trying to close a school of 25 students, but the bus route for the children was going to be in excess of two hours in one direction. You have to weigh all these things. Can you provide them a viable program in the setting they are in, or are you going to give up a lot of that child's home time and lack of community with the four-hour bus ride? The children are not getting quality education if they are too tired when they get there.

Mr. Keyes: I just asked that question, as I well remember my final year in public school was spent in a school with three students: my next-door-neighbours' daughter, myself and my brother. They eventually decided to close the school and bus us on an alternate basis every other day by a member of the two families involved rather than pay the teacher the \$600 for the year.

Mrs. Austin: You certainly had a good teacher-pupil ratio.

Mr. Keyes: It was a great pupil-teacher ratio.

Mr. Adams: Mrs. Austin, you may be looking at the strongest example against your argument.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Is this the only study that has been done to show that a school of 20 is okay but a school of three does not work?

Mr. Jackson: I appreciate your brief, but in reading it I could not help but get a sense that you have expressed some concerns in the brief by your association about the manner in which provincially based policies are not being enforced.

Mrs. Austin: I was referring to section 182 of the act.

Mr. Jackson: We are currently examining the area of semestering and we are receiving a lot of suggestions that we should either study or mandate a certain configuration. But behind that is the call that the public be involved, not just the school board, not just the teachers and the principals. We have had some say it should be

just the principal and the teacher, and I objected to that. I felt it should be a community process. I used the model for school closure to demonstrate the fact that there are guidelines in place which, when followed, will do well.

I thought maybe one of your answers to Mr. Keyes would be that the optimum size for a school should well be established by the parents, the students and the school board after there has been considerable discussion and consultation.

You basically said that, but that is the point that scares me now. If we start looking into semestering, to what extent will it be done properly? That is the situation I have in my riding, where the public consultation element is not being adhered to. It is at variance with our own policy on school closure, and we are getting into all sorts of trouble over it. The focus is no longer whether schools should or should not be semestered, but how it is being approached by the school board. I wonder just how effective we are as legislators in putting in these regulations or policies if they are not being enforced.

Do you have any recommendations with respect to section 183 as an example of how a school organization, or in this instance—

Mrs. Austin: I will make two points. We were able to document approximately 40 times where my local board contravened the Education Act. As well, we reviewed the ministry's guidelines for closure and compared them to boards of education policies. Out of 45 policies we looked at, approximately 37 did not adhere to the ministry's guidelines for closure. There is a real problem, we feel, in that direction with the ministry's policy.

Then we were told they are guidelines only and boards do not have to adhere to them, that the guidelines do not matter anyway, as far as I can understand. Then when it came to section 183, when we were able to document that contraventions had occurred, we got a reply that, "We expect compliance, but we don't enforce the legislation."

I feel there has to be some form of enforcement from somewhere so that boards have to deal with school closure in an open session. And not only deal with school closure; there are many other incidents where boards are discussing things within a closed session that do not adhere to the legislation.

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As well, it has been said that the legislation is so open to interpretation that you can discuss

pretty well anything in closed session and get away with it, if you listen to our board's interpretation. Our interpretation is different from that. I do have a letter from Dr. Shapiro where he specifically states that school closure is not an issue to be discussed within a closed session of the board.

Mr. Jackson: Why I am trying to tie this to semestering is that I would not want to see a decision to semester a school done in a similar fashion. If we were to develop it in the same manner in which school closures are dealt with, it does not necessarily guarantee that the public consultation will be done.

My other question has to do with this notion of ability grouping and grade promotion. You have within your brief addressed the issue of split grades, double splits and even triple splits. It strikes me that in our examination of streamlining and dismantling the notion of strict adherence to grade promotion, you may have have access to a considerable amount of information that might be of value to this committee.

Mrs. Austin: There has been research conducted by a professor at Queen's University in Kingston. I cannot think of his name. I tried to recall it earlier today and I cannot. He has done extensive research on multigrade classrooms.

I just received a book, the Small Rural Primary School, A Matter of Quality, that was written by Adrian Bell and Alan Sigsworth. Mr. Bell is making a presentation to the small schools conference in May that is being set up by OISE. He has done a lot of research about multigraded classrooms as well.

East York has just started a small school with some multigraded classrooms in it. In Durham there is a school called Thorah Central. It was going to try the multigraded situation with just two or three grades, and now the whole school is multigraded. A lot of boards are going back and looking at this type of education, because they are finding that when kids are with multiaged, they are not under the same kind of pressures as when they are only with their own age group.

Mr. Jackson: There is less restriction, that is for sure.

Had I had time, I wanted to ask the Grey County Board of Education to clarify their recommendation, again on page A-5: "That the Ministry of Education extend distance education access centres to rural southern Ontario." I believe it is a neighbour board to you, in a sense; it is just on the other side of the Simcoe board from you. Did you want to comment a bit

on that? Implicit in that is the delivery of education services more in a community-based setting than they would be in terms of the busing alternative, which you have made reference to.

I appreciate the research conducted by the University of Aberdeen showing that as many as one child in three suffers a form of trauma through busing. Most of the response to the closure of community schools is extended busing for large portions of the school day.

Mrs. Austin: Under our board's proposal, the one location of the school, there would be 100 per cent busing. There would not be any child who would be capable of walking to the school because of the location.

We feel it is easier to bring the teacher or bring some services to the school than to bus the children to the other area. But again, that takes a bit of funding and some thought of how you are going to do it, and some commitment on behalf of the board or the ministry to support this type of thought. If they just reverse the idea—there cannot be quality education in the small school—if that is the basis of all their decisions, they will not even try to come up with any innovative ideas of how to provide in a smaller school setting. That is the problem.

Mr. Vice-Chairman: Thank you, Mrs. Austin, for coming and appearing before the committee.

Mrs. Austin: Thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I learned my appreciation for country music and euchre on my school bus, so that hour and a half in every day—

Mr. Jackson: Those days you were not being thrown out the back end of it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I also learned how to fly out the back end of a school bus, but that is another matter.

Mr. Jackson: Because he landed on his head, he is a member of the New Democratic Party to this day.

Mrs. O'Neill: A very high forehead, as well.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: More to the point.

The Vice-Chairman: Order.

Our next presentation this afternoon is from the Science Teachers' Association of Ontario. I would invite them to come forward and make the introductions and proceed with their presentation.

Mrs. O'Neill: As these people come forward, may I tell them how they absolutely saved my life?

The Vice-Chairman: By all means.

Mrs. O'Neill: I do not know whether they individually did—

Interjection.

Mrs. O'Neill: No, it was not on a bus.

I was asked to make a presentation to a national conference on emergency measures in schools, and if it had not been for your video on safety in the classroom, I would not have known where to start. But once I saw that video, we got some insightful stuff going, and it really turned out to be quite a hit. I actually showed the video at the conference and people were very impressed.

It was really neat. That was done in Thomas L. Kennedy Secondary School, where I had the pleasure to teach at one time, so the whole thing tied together very beautifully.

Mr. Everett: Thank you very much.

Mr. Jackson: Did you hold any job for any length of time? The longer I listen—is there a board you have not—

Mrs. O'Neill: Actually, I was at Thomas L. Kennedy for six years. I really was.

Madam Chairman: As you can tell, it is late in the day; the committee members are somewhat punchy.

Mr. Keyes: It is getting late in our hearings.

Madam Chairman: We have been long awaiting your presentation. Quite frankly, we have heard a lot about math and science and where they fit in with OSIS and in our current information system. We have heard a lot about shortages of teachers in those areas, and so we are very much looking forward to what you have to tell us today.

Please begin whenever you are ready. We have allocated one half hour for the presentation, and we do hope there will be some time during that half hour left for members' questions. Please start by identifying yourself for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

SCIENCE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Mr. Everett: My name is Peter Everett. I am the president of the Science Teachers' Association of Ontario for the current year. During the course of the first page or so of my brief, I will introduce the other members of the association accompanying me today.

On behalf of the Science Teachers' Association of Ontario, as president, I want to thank you for this opportunity to appear before such an important committee of the Legislature. The

impact of the findings of this committee will be felt well into the next century, and STAO is truly honoured to be able to put forth its views to the committee.

I will begin by providing the committee with a very brief overview of the history, the constituents and the mission of the association. Although our written submission includes references to current issues facing teachers in this province, I will address this committee on only the four issues of OSIS, semestering, grade promotion and streaming. We will all be pleased to respond to questions after this short address.

STAO will be 100 years old in 1990. We have a membership of about 2,300 people. Included in this number are professional educators from every level of instruction. These people are represented by a board of directors of 45 members. The board members represent every Ontario geographic region as well as specific interest groups. For example, on the board are institutional councillors representing elementary science teachers, francophone science teachers, college of applied arts and technology instructors, university professors and Ministry of Education officials. The policies developed and ratified by the board of directors are carried out by the executive group.

At this point, I would like to draw to the attention of the committee that I am accompanied by three other members of STAO. By way of introduction, Valerie Stief was formerly consultant in primary-junior education for the North York Board of Education. She is presently associate professor, York University, with a mandate in primary-junior science for Ontario.

Douglas Wrigglesworth is a long-time member of the association and its executive group. Mr. Wrigglesworth is also the association's outstanding teacher of the year for 1988, as a chemistry teacher in the North York board. Presently, Doug has been seconded to the Ministry of Education in the program implementation and review branch.

John Percy is our honorary president. Dr. Percy is a professor of astronomy at the University of Toronto. He also serves STAO by sitting on the editorial board of our journal, *Crucible*.

I am presently vice-principal of Lisgar Collegiate in Ottawa for the Ottawa Board of Education, and I would like to thank the Ottawa Board of Education for allowing me to come here to be part of this presentation.

Mrs. O'Neill: They like to show off their stuff.

Mr. Everett: I am sure Mrs. Dobell will be pleased to know that.

As a result of an ongoing, long-term planning exercise, STAO has developed and maintained a mission statement. This is stated as follows: Promoting excellence in science education through leadership and service. Supporting this statement are three aims: to provide support for the teachers of science in the province, to provide leadership based on a vision of science education that is continually renewed and to continue to nurture the association. Under each of these aims we have specific areas of emphasis. There is no need to discuss those today.

Representative of some of the activities of STAO are documents which are included in a package that was previously circulated. In that package is included a STAO position paper on curriculum. Its full title is A Rationale for Quality Science Education for Schools in the Province. There is an executive summary of that, the small blue folder, and I have included the latest edition of our journal, *Crucible*, which I will make reference to near the end.

At this time, I would like to speak directly on the four areas identified as this select committee's mandate, so I would move to the page beginning with OSIS.

It is becoming very clear that the document OSIS has focused a great deal of attention on the process of education in the province. In the very short time the document has been in the school system, a great deal of criticism, and perhaps misunderstanding, has been directed at the effect, at least the short-term effect, that OSIS is having on secondary education.

Another factor for consideration is that the subject guidelines, the second-generation user's documents or user's guides, are even more recent than the parent document OSIS. These documents too must be taught from, revised and refined. The process of curriculum implementation, review, evaluation and, eventually, reimplementation requires several years.

STAO recommends that, as a policy document, OSIS be fine-tuned. The implementation of the document needs more time. Teachers and administrators are just now getting a handle on it. The implementation process has to this point, however, raised several areas of concern. These areas are as follows: low enrolments in the technical and family studies subjects; the appearance of a 4.5-year secondary education; the appearance, in the senior years of secondary

school, of the AM-timetable-only student; the appearance of a streaming process that is based on failure; the concern for the fast-tracking student and the disappearance of some noncore subjects; the concern for prerequisites of the Ontario secondary school diploma; and the abilities and the needs of the general-level student.

STAO also recognizes that there has been a positive impact on the climate of education in Ontario as a result of this implementation process. The evidence for this includes the infusion of curriculum development activities by teachers across the province; more opportunities for education credits earned through nontraditional formats—co-op ed, trans ed; clearly more enthusiasm for the subject matter in all of its objectives; more and more involvement of the teachers' professional groups in curriculum issues and other educational concerns beyond that of political or protective issues.

OSIS has allowed for—indeed, it has encouraged—a variety of teaching strategies being incorporated directly into the curriculum: peer coaching, mentoring, small group work, etc. The document has also precipitated greater interaction across the grade 8-9 school year. This has served the students well in assisting the transition from elementary to secondary schooling. Studies such as *School and Me* indicate the first two months of the grade 9 year are critical in the student's chances for success in secondary school.

To fully implement OSIS, we feel there needs to be fewer teacher-student contacts. This can be effected with not much increase in educational spending. What it does mean is that serious consideration must be given to move away from the traditional agrarian-based school timetable. Schools fully open for 12 months of the year would provide more educational flexibility for both the teacher and the students. A more cost-efficient system, it would encompass a lower pupil-teacher ratio. A mandated lower ratio would allow for more effective education. It would also allow for safer laboratory instruction, naturally a concern for this organization.

Streaming: It is the Science Teachers' Association of Ontario's view that the practice of determining the placement of students into basic, general or advanced levels of difficulty has resulted in streaming by failure. It is time for a re-examination and a restatement of the criteria by which a student is placed in a level of difficulty. Streaming occurs presently as a result

of several factors. The more important of these which presently operate to determine a student's placement are: Has a student failed the subject at a more advanced level? In which level of difficulty is the peer group of that student placed? And what are the parental expectations for the child?

Streaming should result in a homogeneous grouping of students with similar learning needs or learning styles. If this were to be the case, teachers then could address the subject matter through strategies which would match the learning style of the student and also perhaps remediate learning deficiencies. This type of grouping of students would and should occur at several stages as a child moves through school. These, for lack of a better term, "critical interventions" to reassess and refine the awareness of the student's learning style—how the student perceives and processes information—would also determine whether or not the student was ready to proceed to the next level or grade.

Streaming can be an effective way of handling a homogeneous group of students. The streaming must occur to best meet student needs, identified through learning styles. Streaming should not be intended to group students by failure, intellectual ability, peer pressures or parental expectation. All of these are the sociological reasons which account for the present placement of the student in a given level of difficulty.

Grade promotion: I introduced the concept of "critical intervention" in presenting some ideas on streaming. Critical intervention is a concept, a term that I am referring to as an attempt to bring together many areas of research on teaching and learning. The intervention or assessment must occur at the end of each of the primary years, perhaps at the end of grade 6, grade 8 and subsequent years in secondary school. The intervention would assess the student's learning style against appropriate teaching strategies as well as the achievement of curriculum objectives.

If these objectives were stated as exit objectives for the child rather than the present practice of stating entrance objectives for the teacher, both student assessment and teacher accountability would be a simpler task. Promotion would result when a set number of exit objectives had been achieved. The promotion would occur in discrete, separate subject groupings, not as a packaged chronological grade advancement.

With each promotion, an updated learning style inventory would also follow the student to enable the receiving teacher to match teaching

strategies with learning styles. Ideally, failure would disappear. The question to be answered at the intervention is, "What are the skills, knowledges and attitudes that a child must be able to demonstrate prior to the next critical intervention?"

An obvious second question is, "How are these to be mediated or if necessary remediated?" We now have, arguably, entrance objectives for the teacher by grade, based on age not intellectual function or abilities. We perhaps should have exit objectives for the student assessed by a variety of measurements. The impact of these suggestions would obviously require an enhanced student service guidance function in the systems.

Semestering: Semestering in the secondary schools clearly allows for flexibility in programming for the school. It has advantages for the teachers in fewer class preparations, longer class time and fewer pupil contacts with a proportionately reduced marking load for the individual teachers. These reasons may account for its adoption by a great number of secondary schools in the province.

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Concurrent with the rise in the number of semestered schools and the implementation of OSIS, there has been a marked drop in the number of students taking noncore, optional subjects. This has been particularly true for technical and family studies subjects; it is somewhat true for other subjects, such as third languages and music. In semestered schools there is not the timetable space to allow a school to continue to carry these subjects; consequently they are removed from the courses offered.

I wish to state two other concerns that appear as a result of semestering. Most teachers agree that in presenting a given course of study in a semestered format some compacting occurs, meaning that rarely is the prescribed course of study completed. However, and more important, I believe it is difficult to observe and measure some of the higher-order thinking skills, such as synthesis and evaluation, in a four-month-long exposure to a student compared with a 10-month-long exposure. The teaching and assimilation of these thinking skills are very necessary hidden components in all our curriculum. For these reasons, STAO has serious reservations with respect to the teaching of science in a semestered format.

I will finish with the conclusions as they are stated.

The Ministry of Education should consider adopting a non-agrarian-based school calendar in order to promote a more efficient, effective structure for the delivery of educational services in the public sector.

The public educational system must continue to be held accountable to both the taxpayer and the student. This must not be a shotgun or a snapshot accountability, but it should be a continuous accountability with clearly stated, properly formulated learning objectives as well as attainable entrance and exit objectives. Provincial reviews may well serve as a good starting point for this continuous accountability.

The Ministry of Education must seriously consider mandating a maximum class size in science in order to allow the curriculum to be delivered and acquired in an effective, safe environment. Attention must also be directed to upgrading laboratory facilities.

OSIS must be fine-tuned. The process of implementation, along with the development of second-generation documents must be allowed to continue. Emphasis must continue to be given to the primary-junior division in support of teachers implementing Science is Happening Here.

Pre-service, in-service and ongoing professional development, encompassing certification of our teachers and administrators, must be carefully examined. Policies and procedures to address these issues must be developed in co-operation with teachers' professional associations.

Student placement should not be as a result of failure or sociological influences; placement should be the result of an appropriate intervention as a result of the development of a unique learning profile. Student services/guidance functions should be enhanced.

Semestering in secondary schools, as a framework to facilitate student learning needs, must be carefully and critically examined.

Reports of committees such as this one and the Premier's Council will have a great influence on how educational systems in this province will view these issues and these recommendations and these "images of the future." The findings and recommendations of this committee will assist in determining which image will become focused and dominant. This will result in statements of educational priorities and a definition of the umbrella role of the educators in the province at all levels.

Before closing, I would like to call to the attention of this committee the association's

journal, *Crucible*. I would like also to extend a warm invitation to the members of this committee to STAO 88, our annual conference, the theme of which is *Expanding Horizons*. Ms. Stief is the chair of STAO 88 this year. A review of the conference program, found in the *Crucible*, will give the reader an overview of both the concerns and the directions of science education at this time in this province.

I would close with a quotation from Dr. Norman Henchey, whom I quoted in other parts of the paper, "We are all mapmakers for the territory of the learning society."

On behalf of STAO, I would like to sincerely thank this committee for giving us this opportunity to play a role in making that map.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Everett, on behalf of the select committee, I would like to thank you for your excellent presentation. We will go directly to members' questions. I know a number of you do have questions and we are short of time.

Mr. Adams: Thank you very much. It was all clearly put. I had a chance just to glance at this material which you provided, but you mentioned the conference. Just looking at the titles, the presenters and the themes, it looks like a very exciting affair. Yet the Science Council of Canada study shows that across the whole country, not only in Ontario, there are real problems with science education.

For example, it is often pointed out—you might not be too worried about this—that it is relatively rare for elected politicians to have scientific qualifications and it is very rare for lawyers to have scientific qualifications. We do not want to take just those two professions as objectives for all of your students, but the suggestion is that people with higher education in science stay in science; they do not go anywhere else.

That is one thing. Another thing that is often pointed out is that even students with good, hard science backgrounds through high school often switch when they get to university, either to social science or to the humanities.

Both of those arguments suggest that there is something really quite seriously wrong in the science education in the country, and that is despite the fact that there is all this excitement at your conference and in your presentation.

Mr. Everett: I would like to respond initially to that and then ask Ms. Stief, Mr. Wrigglesworth or Mr. Percy if they would like to respond. Under the present guidelines, the STS issue, if I could summarize your question as to

science in a technological society, and the interface between science and technology and society, under our present guidelines in each of the courses in each of the years there are two parts of the curriculum where teachers must address sociological or societal implications as well as technological applications to the course.

Whether the student is studying a biology component, a physical science component or a chemistry component, the teacher is directed to bring to the group he or she is teaching an impact to society or a relevance to society. Hopefully, that would have more of a carryover effect than we have been successful in having up till now. There is also a new course at the OAC level, Science and Society, which is directed towards students who are interested in science and its tremendous impact or potential impact on all of us, but who are not going to pursue a science program in a university or post-secondary course.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: I would concur with some of the things Mr. Everett is saying. Certainly one of the things established by research that could keep students in science is making science relevant to their lives. The new guidelines, which we are in the midst of implementing, as Mr. Everett pointed out, very strongly emphasize the relevance of their science to the lives of the students.

The concept of scientific literacy is a common theme through all the new guidelines, again with the idea in mind that we might have elected representatives, such as we have here, who are scientifically literate to make the decisions that are so important to us all.

Mr. Adams: I think this document, which again I have had a chance only to glance at, mentions seven curriculum reviews under way across the country. There is a strong suggestion in it that the science teachers are very concerned, because they are not involved in those reviews. Am I wrong? Do you have a sense that you are not fully involved in the curriculum review? I see it mentions it is a very long time before curricula are published once they are produced. Is this a very real sense you have, that you are not involved in these reviews, that they are too slow and so on?

Mr. Everett: Speaking for this organization, that is not a concern. I am speaking narrowly, for science. Its involvement in curriculum review and development and implementation has been encouraged by ministry officials for as long as I have been active in the association, and I do not share that concern.

Mr. Adams: It is in here, though, is it not?

Mr. Everett: I believe it is, yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That was one of the questions I was going to ask, if you shared that concern, which I noted there as well.

Can you tell me a little bit more about the appearance of the morning-timetable-only student, a little more about that reality?

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Mr. Everett: Very briefly, students who have the intellectual goods, the ability to get an Ontario secondary school diploma, many of them I am finding in the schools I am familiar with, will take eight subjects in grade 9, eight subjects in grade 10, eight subjects in grade 11, a couple of summer school courses for credits and then, at the end of the fourth year of school, will have perhaps 26 credits out of the 30 that are necessary for the OSSD. He or she will come to the school requesting a morning-only timetable, freeing them to do what they wish to do in the afternoon, which is usually a job.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You know this anecdotally from your own experience, in terms of your own class. Is there information gathered about this in the boards you work in about this kind of development? Is it something we can find out more about? I have a lot of difficulties with a lot of things in Radwanski. That is an aside. One of the things that comes up there, which I have some difficulties with, is this concentration on part-time work.

In dealing with notions of semestering and also some of the other matters we are talking about, it would be interesting to get a fix on how much of this is happening with the advanced-level student primarily. I presume that is what you are saying.

Mr. Everett: That is correct.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Do you have any idea? Interjection.

Mr. R. F. Johnston : I have not asked for anything today. Come on.

I do not know if it is possible for the ministry to find that kind of information from the various boards about that kind of timetabling. It would be fascinating to know if that kind of option is available, especially when we are learning that the real fast-tracking is not happening. That business of four and a half years and then going off to university does not seem to be taking place. Rather, options such as you are talking about, maybe even to come back the next fall and do the same thing with another four courses, are taking place and they are still taking five

years to go through. It would be very interesting to map that out a bit if it is possible to get that kind of information.

Ms. Stief: I think you might find some of that information through the multicultural components in the school boards, looking at the cultural makeup of schools and the number of students taking which subjects and whether they are in or out of school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is an interesting correlation. I do not know if we can get that, but it jumped out at me as something no one else had talked about.

One of the other things I noticed that nobody else has mentioned was a concern you have around semestered schools and the question of being able to determine the cognitive development of a student within a four-month period. That is the first time anyone has said that to us that I recall, putting it in that kind of fashion.

I do not know the theory of this, how much time is required at different age groups to be able to make determinations about whether somebody is putting things together well. Can you talk a little about that? Nobody else has actually raised that with us. Obviously it is a pedagogical reason for being concerned about semestering. We have been hearing mostly logistical reasons, both from students and boards and everybody who is either in favour or against, not things that pedagogy is—

Mrs. O'Neill: And science is usually picked out as one of the subjects that best fits semestering.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is a good point, Yvonne.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: May I make a couple of comments on that? I think we should not confuse longer classes with semestering. I think most science teachers would prefer to have the longer classes that are normally associated with semestering. The compaction idea in our report is a very real thing. Most practising teachers say that immediately about semestering, that it is difficult for students to absorb the material at the rate they are required to within the time slotted in a semestered system.

There are lots of administrative reasons that semestering is a neat thing. It gets a little harder, I think, to find good pedagogical reasons for it. That would be my comment.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But it was the downside of it which nobody has really expressed strongly before in this way, and I wanted to know about the rationale.

Mr. Everett: I am speaking from the experience of discussing these recommendations with my executive group. It is a distillation of ideas which were generated that way. To clearly measure a higher order of thinking skills, such as synthesis and evaluation, takes time. The point we are making there is that we can stand better behind a judgement or a decision that has taken us 10 months to come to than one taken over four months.

I would also like to make another comment about semestering. The other comment is not in here; it should be. For our general-level students, semestering has some advantages because the nature of the way they learn and the way motivation occurs within them is such that the more immediate, the better; a generalization. If they can get a reward in four months, they are more likely to stay with this and stick with school than if they have to wait until next June to get their reward. There is an advantage of semestering for a person who learns in that, as we call it, G-level framework.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: This is not for the point of argument, but just to raise the issue. When one tries to determine some of these higher thinking skills, synthesis and evaluation, is it not also a major factor in all of this that at the high school level we have students with many teachers during their time in school who see them for only a year or in some cases a semester; whereas at the primary levels they have the teachers with them much more and see them over a much longer period?

I wonder what the impact of that is in terms of your ability to make those kinds of assertions about how they are doing at the high school level, because of the segmented day, whether it is semestered or nonsemestered, and the fact that they are not with a given teacher for that long.

Mr. Everett: There are lots of issues there. I do not know where to start. Ms. Stief, do you want to react to the primary one?

Ms. Stief: I do not think you can argue that. The more time you watch a child in a holistic environment doing a variety of things, the more comprehensive your understanding of the social and cognitive development of that child, whether she is five or 18. You cannot argue your argument.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I guess I am trying to look at where the weight of it is. We are looking at these issues and you are producing a strong argument against semestering which we have not heard before. I guess I am just counter-

balancing that: Is semestering the issue in terms of making those determinations or can you really say that for a lot of teachers, in that given year under the old system of shorter classes and not seeing them for as long a time, that concentrated period, they can still make that determination better?

Mr. Wrigglesworth: Whether this is connected, certainly the buzzword now in science education and in many other areas is "evaluation." Teachers are vitally concerned with the whole process of evaluation. Many of us have been evaluating by the seat of our pants for too long and we are starting to really concern ourselves with evaluation as a constructive part of the teaching process. The questions you are raising here are being raised in all kinds of workshops, conferences and so on.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is a thematic thing that we are starting to hear a bit of as well.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Johnston. I would just note for your information that there is a representative from the Ministry of Education here who was frantically taking notes as you made your request for information. I am sure that will be forthcoming.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I thought he might have been dropping off, thinking I was not going to come up with one today.

Madam Chairman: Just for the record, you have been very well behaved. There has been no request since last Thursday. I was surprised to see the ministry was still here.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have received complaints.

Madam Chairman: Just before you go, I wonder if you would comment on something for my own personal information. Traditionally, there has been a great deal of difficulty attracting girls to science and to mathematics. My understanding is that, while it has improved somewhat and there are certain efforts being made to counteract that, it is still prevalent today. I wonder if you have any statistical information on that or any comments to make.

Ms. Stief: I think that kind of statistical information is available from most school boards on a breakdown of the number of girls entering after grade 11 and staying with a science—physics, chemistry or biology—right through to grade 13. Those statistics are available. For some of us who have spent a fair amount of time looking at the patterns of girls and the question of equity in science, the situation is still fairly dismal.

Madam Chairman: I will pre-empt Mr. Johnston and ask the ministry if perhaps it would be able to provide those statistics on a province-wide basis.

Mrs. O'Neill: Could I have a supplementary?

Madam Chairman: Certainly. I think we have one more comment from Mr. Everett first.

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Mr. Everett: I was going to say that the association shares your concern. We have devoted a special issue of the *Crucible* to that issue and we are continually reinforcing our concern for providing role models for girls to continue in science and mathematics careers.

Ms. Stief: I would just add that with the conference program, one of the mandates to the chairs of my program committee was that they had to have women who were not women in science but they were women scientists. There is a difference in the terminology that is used. Young girls seeing role models have to see them in an actual role model, not an educator talking about science education for young girls. I think there is a big distinction that we need to be really careful of with the young girls and the young boys we are dealing with, particularly in the public school, the elementary school section.

Mrs. O'Neill: I was very happy to see you include, although briefly, the technical teachers and the teachers of family studies in your presentation. With the development of OSIS, I know these two groups of people are feeling rather lost in the whole milieu of curriculum development. Some of them are working in very isolated situations, and I really hope that you will continue to help them find their place. Most of the family studies teachers in this province now have a degree in science with a major in family studies or some other component, and I really hope that you will continue to make them feel welcome in your organization.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Science Teachers Association of Ontario for your contribution to our committee today.

Our final presentation today will be the Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped, which many members know as ARCH. Mr. Baker, would you come forward, please? Welcome to our committee today. We are looking forward to hearing your comments on the committee's mandate. Please begin whenever you are ready. You could start by confirming your identity for the purposes of Hansard.

DAVID BAKER

Mr. Baker: My name is David Baker. I am the executive director of the Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped.

If I could also clarify the status under which I am here, I am appearing at the request of a number of disabled people and organizations, but I am not here formally representing the Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped, which is a legal centre providing services to disabled people. Traditionally, ARCH does not take a position on specific issues. There are one or two exceptions that relate directly to provision of legal services, but I am here as someone who has had experience in representing a number of disabled kids within the special education system, and specifically the appeal process, the Human Rights Code process and the Charter of Rights process, all of which is seeking to advance the interests of disabled people within the education process.

I understand you have heard from a number of the groups and individuals within groups to whom I have provided representation, including the Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities. I believe there have been representations made from the deaf community, the Integration Action Group and other organizations. They represent interests we have represented on an individual basis within cases.

As many of you are aware, Bill 82, the amendments to the Education Act, came into force in the early 1980s and were fully implemented as of September 1, 1985; and as anyone who has read the report of the Social Assistance Review Committee will be aware, education is tremendously important if disabled people are to gain equality of opportunity and some advancement and independence within our society.

The committee was emphasizing the need for rehabilitation. In discussing with you the education system, I think we want to talk about something which does not require rehabilitation but which deals with issues of disability right from the earliest stages in a child's development so that we are not confronted with disabled people as being dependent upon welfare and in need of rehabilitation later on in the process.

Again, as anyone who has read the SARC report would be aware, disabled people are the largest single classification of people who are dependent upon welfare in this province, and many people point to the education system as a way in which more can be done to change that situation.

I want to emphasize right at the outset the importance of Bill 82 and the advances which have occurred at the local level as a result of the implementation of Bill 82. Certainly it has been very significant, and the points I want to raise are suggestions as to how the special education system, again related to your mandate as a committee, might be reconsidered, examined and improved upon.

My experience has been, initially at least through Bill 82, with the appeal process under the Education Act. There are major problems with this that have resulted in the current situation, which is that virtually no appeals are going to the special education tribunal. It is not because all is well; it is because there are so many levels of appeal that any parent who is trying to survive an up to two-year process, with a great deal of expense, cannot be reasonably expected to participate any longer. Our clinic does not provide representation through the appeal process any more, because we were virtually the only people litigating under that system.

The whole process had broken down to the point where only our cases were there before the tribunals, and we did not feel that it was a fair representation to be taking cases that could be brought only through resources such as our own. We are aware of families who have mortgaged their homes in order to participate in the appeal process. The expenses involved in bringing those cases forward have far exceeded the costs of sending the children to private school, which is the option that had been followed pre-1975, when vocational rehabilitation services started to be used to subsidize the private process.

Unfortunately, that is the situation we have lapsed back into. Rather than go through the appeal process, where there is dissatisfaction with the special education system, we have parents once again reaching into their own pockets to provide what they consider to be an appropriate education.

So the first problem that I would identify for you is the fact that we have, under the regulations and under the legislation, an extremely complex, lengthy, multitiered appeal process which in our opinion is totally unnecessary. There need be only one appeal within the board of education rather than the current five or six levels of appeal, and at the provincial level there need be only one appeal rather than the current two.

I think there is pretty much consensus as well that, while the system represents a shutting down of appeals, the school boards recognize that it is most unfair to parents to put them through this and the boards themselves certainly do not appreciate it. In terms of resources, this could be an important change that might be made.

The second issue, which is referred to at page 2 of the brief that I have submitted to you, concerns sections 71 to 78 of the Education Act, which explicitly provide for segregated schools for "trainably retarded pupils." I am not aware of any sector in the education community, among the parents, advocacy organizations, school boards or the Ministry of Education, which supports the continuation of these sections. If I understand correctly, the ministry has repeatedly said that it intends to do something about the repeal of these sections, but to date that has not occurred.

Let me just emphasize what the effect of these sections has been. Some boards of education offer desegregated schools or classes for trainably retarded children, and they take the position that they cannot consider what might be a more appropriate education for these children because they are bound by the sections of the Education Act. Therefore, to the extent that a more appropriate educational placement might be made, the interests of those children are being compromised, according to these boards, by their reading of sections 71 to 78 of the act.

In other boards, which offer totally integrated placements for developmentally handicapped children who might be labelled trainably retarded under the Education Act process, they are not even identifying these children as being exceptional; that is, they are saying, "You are outside the special education system altogether."

With the tacit agreement of parents who do not appeal that decision by the school board, these children are being placed in regular classes, in my opinion, most appropriately and with supports that are satisfactory and are meeting the needs of the children. But it means the school boards are not receiving the special funding which is available for trainably retarded pupils, which is treble the regular funding for such children.

These boards, in their commitment to the idea of integration, are sacrificing this premium rate of funding for the children as a result of the existence of these sections. I would suggest that either way, the funding for special education—

for pupils who could potentially be identified as being trainably retarded—should be integrated into the overall funding made available to school boards and not provided in such a way that boards are forced to make a pyrrhic choice between segregation, despite what might be the most suitable program for the child, on the one hand, and sacrificing the provincial funding, on the other.

1700

The third issue I would like to put before you concerns the way in which the placement decisions are made. Every board, in my experience, states that what it is seeking to do on behalf of an exceptional child is in the child's best interests. In other words, it is very rare indeed that school boards defend their decisions on the basis of resources or, as I have mentioned earlier, the provisions of the Education Act. They all take the position that what they are doing is best for this particular child. Unfortunately, they are not very tolerant of opinions to the contrary.

What is going on out there is that for a particular child with a particular board, you could find that exactly the placement which is being sought by the parents of that child might be available from the separate board in that same region or a neighbouring public board. You are, therefore, confronting parents with a situation in which they are being told that the placement they are seeking is not appropriate and not in their child's best interests.

At the same time, parents can look at the neighbouring board or the separate board and see that precisely that would be available, if only they lived across this border or they somehow could convert to Catholicism and have themselves made eligible for those services. This is a big issue in a whole range of areas.

The proposition I would like to put to you is that many of the school boards, particularly those, frankly, which are not offering integrated placements which are sought by, as you are aware, many groups, tend to be the larger boards which have the resources to make available a selection to parents.

The proposal I am bringing to you is not that we integrate everybody or segregate everybody but that where there are reasonable differences between educational experts as to what would be appropriate for a particular child and where the resources of the board permit, the parental choice should dictate, rather than an imposed statement as to, "This is appropriate and this is not."

I think that certainly my experience with smaller boards and less resourced boards, particularly in the north, is that the whole concept of integration is not new, novel or a brand-new concept. They are, in fact, providing that kind of education and have historically for many years.

I am aware that there are a number of other provinces that would be considered have-not provinces which are providing these kinds of services. They may not be in a position to provide the more high-tech—I use the term “segregated”—services. It may be legitimate or it may not under the Education Act. I think that is a matter to be determined in the individual case, but where there are reasonable differences and resources permit, I would request consideration be given to offering the parents the choice.

After all, throughout the whole education system, certainly as a parent, I am aware that I have a range of choices as to which school my child will attend, whether in French immersion or whatever. There seem to be innumerable choices available, but for a child who is identified as being exceptional under our present system, there are no choices. The appeal process has not proved to be a mechanism for allowing parental choice to be a consideration in the placement of exceptional kids.

The fourth point concerns the provincial schools, particularly provincial schools for blind and deaf pupils. This relates to choice in the sense that local boards offer programming for deaf and blind pupils. In the case of deaf pupils, almost universally this tends to be what is referred to as oral education, involving lip-reading and a desire to integrate the child through a particular communication means.

As you may be aware through representations that have been made in the Legislature by Mr. Johnston, deaf adults find oral education less than satisfactory in many cases. The signed education system, referred to as a total communication approach to education for deaf pupils, is available almost exclusively in the provincial schools. The enrolments in provincial schools are declining because of what is referred to as the grants-in-lieu program, through which the Ministry of Education encourages local boards to pick up services for deaf pupils and for blind pupils who would be eligible for these provincial schools. There is no appeal mechanism as part of the regular education appeal process, through which we determine whether or not a child is appropriately placed under the Educa-

tion Act currently, that will grant you access to these provincial schools.

With respect to this issue, my request to you is that parents have available to them the option of asking for or seeking a placement in a provincial school. Again, if that is an appropriate option for the child, albeit the board may consider its local option of an oral placement for the child, the provincial placement should be open and should be something which the parents could seek and receive through the appeal process.

The fifth issue, again, relates to the considerations that come into effect through the appeal process. This relates to what I call the social considerations as opposed to the academic considerations that relate to a child's placement. Here I am thinking of such things as families where the parents are deaf and use sign language in the home, and that is the first language in the home. I have become involved in situations where parents have special training in working with developmentally handicapped children, in addition to having a developmentally handicapped child.

There is the issue of very long bus rides, which I heard you discussing earlier. For children such as those with emotional problems, behavioural problems, for whom forming friendships is a great problem, where you spend your lifetime on a bus and you are not with your local kids, somehow your ability to interact socially and to deal with your behavioural problems can become increasingly problematic. These are considerations which the appeal process under the Education Act does not take into account in any way. Yet in the life of that particular child and in the educational experience of that particular child, these may be, if not the most important, certainly among the most important considerations for that child. Yet, as I say, the appeal process turns a blind eye on these considerations and does not allow them to be taken into account.

The final issue I would raise with you concerns the matter of what it is that the appeal process is doing. Some boards have taken the position that they will only discuss the placement of the child in a particular classroom and not talk about what goes on within that classroom. That may seem extreme, but it is what happens in many cases. Unless parents are prepared to pursue the matter before a provincial tribunal which, as I say, is happening in virtually no cases at the present time, that remains all the discussion which goes on

through the appeal process. Groups, such as associations for children with learning disabilities and many others I know are concerned about the fact that when discussing placement, there is no full discussion of what the program will be and which services will be provided to the child in that particular placement.

1710

I noted in the brief that in legal terms it would appear that placement is more or less a verb, that is placement in special education programs. I would say that legally it is probably obligatory to discuss programs under the current act. However, I think that could be clarified and it would mean that there would be less of the take-it-or-leave-it approach, which some parents are confronted with under the current situation.

I have noted a number of specific recommendations at the conclusion of the brief, which I would ask that you consider. They relate to the issues I have raised with you in more general terms.

Madam Chairman: Thanks, Mr. Baker. I will now call for questions from the members.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We have had a lot of discussion in the last few weeks about whether we should be making distinctions or not making distinctions between the question of integration and heterogeneous groupings of students, including the exceptional students, and about the issue of streaming for the basic, general and academically advanced kids.

Your brief is dealing primarily with exceptional kids, but I am wondering if you would make any comment about the philosophical questions that lie there and whether you see these things as linked or whether you see them as separate and that we should be dealing with them separately.

Mr. Baker: Certainly, I am aware that a disproportionately large number of children from immigrant families, for example, have, through the process of the IQ test, been identified as being exceptional, so that there is a disproportionate number of visible minorities in basic schools. For example, there are disproportionate numbers of members of those minority groups in schools for the trainably retarded and so on. This is obviously a very basic concern, and the parents of those kids are as concerned about the implications of labelling and the stigmatization that goes on and the streaming of those children into the special education system,

as I am sure they would be if it were a matter of pure discrimination.

The short answer is yes, there are obviously major overlaps and commonalities of interests among the parents and there is a concern generally. Any group, even the groups that are seeking one-to-one education for their kids because they feel they need that kind of intensive relationship, are ultimately cognizant of the fact that they are sacrificing something in the process of seeking that for their child. They are sacrificing the social interaction with non-exceptional kids. Those parents view that as a necessary evil.

If it is possible to meet the needs of those children in an integrated setting, I think any group with which I have been involved, including the deaf community, would say that is great. It is purely a question of how it can be done. In that sense, the interests of immigrant groups not to be streamed out of the education system, and exceptional kids similarly seeking to find their way into regular placements seem to me to hold a great deal of common interest.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yesterday, when we were in Windsor—on your point 3—we heard from Norma Coleman and Michelle Friesen, who are parents with really exceptional kids, multiply disabled children. They are going through enough struggle just keeping them in the home and institutions, let alone trying to get them involved in a school system, but they were very anxious to get them integrated. They have been running into exactly the problem you have identified; that is, that the Essex board there says that the law does not enable them to integrate these kids. In fact, the director came up and congratulated them on their presentation yesterday and said he agreed with them totally, and when the act was changed those kids could be welcomed into the Essex county public board, at the same time as Michelle's kids are now in the Catholic board in that same area.

In their case, my heart went out to them saying yes, let's take Norma's and Michelle's point of view and give their kids a chance, and if it does not work, then you can look to more drastic measures later on in a less integrated fashion. I guess my question is how do we legislate? That is an issue I would have some difficulty with in terms of saying that the view of the parents or that of the parents plus a professional—some outside professional, I presume—must be given priority over a board, where the resources are available.

Mr. Baker: I think there are two issues, both of which I hope I have raised clearly here. One is that the parents of multihandicapped kids such as the ones you have described, in my experience, have tremendous skills around life skills and some of the basic things that are being provided in segregated education systems for those kids. It is a duplication, and the kids are losing the social interaction with nondisabled peers in order to get something which they are getting anyway.

Also, I would put it to you that there are major overlaps between the services provided through the Ministry of Community and Social Services and through other services in order to maintain those kids within the family and what is going on within the segregated schools for those kids. It does not mean that could not be improved, but I am saying I think the social factors outside the classroom are tremendously relevant to the educational placement decisions for kids such as that. I emphasize the need to look at the social needs of the child and at the resources available to the family when making that placement.

The second issue is one of choice. If I understand you correctly, you are saying if one board offers a certain type of placement, another board would not offer that placement. That suggests to me that educators who are qualified are able to see that these children could be within the education system with two completely different approaches, both of which are equally valid. In that situation, I think the emphasis should be placed upon parental choice, and the parents would have a major role to play in making that decision without having to convert or move, which is going on. People are moving around this province in order to get particular kinds of education and moving away from boards that have tremendous resources available to them and could make those placements available, just for that purpose.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: And they are converting as well. I have had in my office people who have done it for precisely that purpose.

I just want to be clear on the process. You are saying, say we keep the identification and placement review committee as one level of the approach that parents can take on this, if they were to go to that IPRC of the Essex County Board of Education and say, "We want our children in the integrated classroom," and the IPRC then says it is not possible; they then bring in somebody from the separate board, who says, "We can do that sort of thing and we do it on a

regular basis." If that evidence were given, then there would be some sort of obligation on the IPRC in a board like Essex to say that kind of placement has to be tried because it is the parents' wish, with some sort of supporting evidence that it is possible.

I guess I just have difficulty knowing where you draw the line on that. I remember taking cases before voc rehab, appeals back in what are now the good old days, ironically, in terms of trying to win these appeals, with experts coming in to say, "This child's disability could be handled if he just got a year of intensive work." That was not given equal weight to the ministry's evidence before the committee, with its experts saying the same things. I wonder how we legislate that notion of whose evidence is equal or on a par, that kind of thing.

Mr. Baker: I think the present system asks, "Is what the school board is offering appropriate?" It certainly does not mean perfection. No one is talking in terms of perfection here. I think the question is: Might a provincial tribunal say something is appropriate one day with the separate board and the next day be asked to say something is inappropriate with the public board? In other words, once again, if that meets a basic, bottom-line level of appropriateness and meets the needs of the child—and reasonable educators may differ, but on this they agree that yes indeed, there are educators who are responsible who are doing this—then it seems to me that should be the level that would satisfy the criteria I am talking about.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: For a regional appeal basis.

Mr. Baker: Yes. I think there should be an opportunity for a frank, clear discussion between the family and the school board, which could take place at what is called the IPRC. But there are so many levels; if you win, God help you, because you are sent back to the bottom and you start over again. You can go around in circles indefinitely, and this has happened. The process that was set up under the regulation, if it is not designed to drive people crazy, certainly has that effect. It could be made so much simpler just by having one good crack at it with the local board.

1720

Mrs. O'Neill: A point of information on Mr. Johnston's point: The local appeal board, and that is the first appeal process after the identification and placement review committee, does usually contain a superintendent from a neigh-

bouring board, as you likely know. It is very difficult, separate/public aside, for a neighbouring superintendent to say something very opposite to the superintendent of the board he is making the judgement on. It is almost intolerable in some cases because these people work together at various levels of—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They will come back and get you at the next IPRC.

Mr. Baker: They sit on each other's appeal boards.

Mrs. O'Neill: Exactly. I am sure that is not a comfortable position in many cases.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I agree.

Mr. Reycraft: I am not sure whether it is because of the time of day, but I do not think I fully appreciate the value that would be gained from recommendations 3 and 4.

It seems to me that the crux of the problem at the present time is the failure of the board to identify as appropriate a placement that is deemed that way by the parent. What you are suggesting in 4 is that where the placement proposed by both is found to be appropriate, the parents' wishes would prevail. But is the problem not the failure of both to agree on what is an appropriate placement?

Mr. Baker: I suppose so, but the present result is that the school board's position would prevail. If it can demonstrate that its suggested placement is appropriate, it wins; it does not have to prove anything more, although that is not the way it is worded through the appeal process. They are usually very critical of the parents' proposed placement. As I say, to me it makes no sense to say that what the parents are seeking is inappropriate if they went next door and got precisely what they were seeking and were told there that it was appropriate. None the less, that is how the issue evolves.

Mr. Reycraft: I will think about that one a little longer.

I want to move down to number 6 as well. My experience with the Roberts School for the hearing impaired in London is that it is parents who are making the decision not to enrol their children in the provincial school. They are suffering from a declining enrolment there, but I am not aware that it is a refusal of the ministry or the school to accept students. My impression is that it is more the determination on the part of parents to have their kids educated closer to home which has caused that decline.

Mr. Baker: There is a very substantial financial incentive to school boards to make

programs available locally called the grants in lieu program which I think underpins that in some way. There is no way through the current Education Act appeal process, where an appropriate placement is to be determined, that you can get into a provincial school. That is a separate issue and you cannot shift over one to the other.

It is true that a lot of parents are seeking the oral education for their children available with local boards. I do not think there is any point in suggesting the contrary. That is clearly the case. However, deaf parents who tend to use American sign language—as I say, signing goes on within the home; that is usually the first language within the home—are seeking to have their children attend these programs where signing is available in the provincial schools and there are real problems for them. That is about 10 per cent of the parents.

I do not have statistics for you in terms of what parents would choose if they were given the option, but at the local level they are not given the option. If the local board has a program, they are told, "This is the appropriate program for the child." They can make application to the province to go to the provincial school, but you have no right to go to the provincial school.

You would be aware that they tried to close the Roberts School not so very long ago because of—

Mr. Reycraft: Not quite accurate.

Mr. Baker: Okay. But certainly they are changing the nature of the Roberts School through bringing in learning-disabled children. The declining enrolment you note is an issue for that particular school, as it will be, the way trends are going, for all the provincial schools. What the deaf community is saying is that there is a role for those provincial schools. I do not believe they would take the position that it should be forced upon parents who would prefer to seek oral education for those children.

What I would predict will occur as a deaf group such as the Ontario Association of the Deaf gets its message out to people is that parents will look at the social needs of their children, particularly as they hit the ages of 10, 11 and 12 and social interaction becomes more important perhaps even than family interaction, which is an important reason for maintaining a child at home—I can certainly understand parents saying, "I don't want my kid to go off across the province to London or Belleville to

go to school." I can certainly understand that, as I am sure you can.

Mr. Reycraft: Or even Milton, heaven forbid.

Mr. Baker: Even Milton.

Mr. Reycraft: Mr. Jackson is not paying attention.

Mr. Baker: The point I am making is that I would predict a revival of interest in having particularly older deaf children go to the provincial schools as the message gets out that sign is an important means of communication. That is a message that has not been getting out until very recently.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Unless American sign language was ever accepted within the regular

school system, which of course it is not, not even as a heritage language at this point. If that were to take place, they might look at the school as an option, but without the option, for that smaller group of families it can be problematic.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank you, Mr. Baker, for bringing your concerns to our committee today.

Mr. Baker: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Just before members leave, I would ask you to note a change in the agenda tomorrow. Our 11:30 a.m. presentation will be by the Ontario Federation of Students which was originally scheduled for five o'clock, if you would make that change to your agenda.

The committee adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

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No. E-22

Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Organization of the Education Process

First Session, 34th Parliament
Wednesday, September 28, 1988



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, September 28, 1988

The committee met at 10:15 a.m. in committee room 1.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: Good morning, I would like to open this morning's meeting of the select committee on education. We are dealing with the organization of the education system in Ontario. Our first presenter this morning is Dr. Connell, who is a visiting professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and also, I believe, is the chairperson of the sociology department at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia.

Welcome to our committee, Dr. Connell, and welcome to Canada. I am not sure how long you have been here so maybe that is a little late in coming.

Dr. Connell: It is pleasant at any time.

Madam Chairman: We have allocated one half-hour for your presentation time, which hopefully will include lots of time at the end for members' questions. Please begin whenever you wish.

R. W. CONNELL

Dr. Connell: Thank you for hearing me. I am here, I guess, because some colleagues at OISE thought it might be of use to you to have some kind of comparative perspective on some of the issues that you are biting into. I have been involved in research on education for the best part of 20 years and have been involved, as far as academics ever get involved, in some debates around education policy in Australia.

I have put together a few notes in the form of a submission which I hope will be the shortest submission that you ever have. I thought I would run through the main points of that pretty briefly and then simply throw things open to questions and discussion.

First of all, I will raise the point at the most general level of the way people formulate statements about the aims of education, which comes to be an issue in almost all general investigations of an education system.

A colleague of mine in Australia, Van Davy, has been looking at the way such statements have been formulated around our country. He has

come up with the observation that, in virtually every case, general statements of the aims of education are formulated in terms of goals about the individual person. This, in some sense, is worrying because there are also legitimate goals of an education system which have to do with the purposes of the system or social purposes at a much more general level.

I simply wanted to throw this in, to suggest that it may be appropriate and in some ways may be quite important to be willing to formulate educational goals at that collective level, for instance, in terms of the contribution that an education system might be making to the necessary work of a society or in terms of the contribution or lack of contribution it might be making to social justice.

Indeed, one of the most interesting policy developments in Australia at the moment at the federal government level is the attempt to hook up apparent changes in the education system to the much larger goals of economic growth and social justice that are currently being formulated by our federal government. This, I might say, is a highly controversial exercise, but at least the attempt is now being quite seriously made.

The second point I want to raise comes out of some research that I have done over the last 10 years on the working lives of teachers, which is an issue that has come more and more into focus in social scientific research on education in the last decade or two. There is now, I think, quite a useful body of research on the nature of teaching as an occupation, the nature of the school as a workplace and the ways in which that shapes and how those, so to speak, industrial conditions shape what teachers tend to do with children.

Most of that research is not in any very useful way connected to policy debates about the way a system as a whole ought to be working, but that is a consideration that I think is quite important and would like to raise for you.

When one is thinking about the ways an education system might be reshaped, there is often a tendency on the part of people who are coming up with reform programs to assume that teachers will simply execute whatever reform program is produced on its merits. That seems to me a somewhat unrealistic kind of assumption to make.

Teachers as a workforce have definite conditions of work. They have some legitimate interests, as any other group of workers has. I would want to argue that those conditions of work and those interests are quite important considerations for people who are designing programs of educational reform.

If you want a program of reform to work, then you must pay reasonably careful attention to the people who, of all people, are most responsible for making it work on the ground and find ways in which their interests, so to speak, can be engaged in making the reforms actually bear fruit.

That does not necessarily mean that you have to buy teachers' support for a program of reforms. Far from it. Everybody in the education trade nowadays is very conscious of financial constraints. Even teacher unions are now highly conscious of that.

But there are other occupational interests that teachers have, which can be engaged. For instance, there are interests in having a well-designed job and in lowering levels of stress. Teaching is a highly stressful job by comparison with most others, being a member of parliament, of course, excepted. There are directions in which one can move which tend to load more stress on to teachers and other directions in which one can move which will make teaching a more rewarding occupation.

That leads into the next point I want to make, which is about the nature of the school as a workplace and the importance, if one wishes to have an education system which is vital and energetic and innovative at the local level, of finding ways of making schools as workplaces produce that kind of local culture.

1020

We in Australia are extremely sensitive to this, I suppose, because our historical heritage is of a highly bureaucratized education system. We faced the same kinds of problems as Canada did in terms of a relatively small population dispersed across a fairly large geographical area. In Australia, the solution to that problem moved in another, and I think much less creative, direction in terms of a highly centralized and bureaucratized education system. We have been fighting our way out of that kind of problem over the last 20 or 30 years.

It remains an issue for school systems in all parts of the world, because there are other kinds of constraints and limits that can be placed on the schools through curriculum devices, curriculum control, through—a point that I will come to

later—the nature of teaching materials that are supplied. I commend to you the issue of how schools can become democratic and vital workplaces in their own right.

We have also, in the past, suffered quite severely from examinationitis. There was a time when the secondary system especially, and to some extent also the primary system, in Australia were dominated by mass external examinations which controlled and narrowed curricula to quite a remarkable degree. This degree of control has gradually relaxed.

It has been a politically difficult exercise, of course, because no government whatever likes losing a degree of control over its employees, which the relaxation of these mechanisms did involve. Nevertheless, there has been a movement in our country, as I believe there was here and in Europe, towards local control over the content of teaching and the setting up of situations where teachers, in particular, can generate appropriate and relevant curricula, according to the particular situation.

It seems to me that there is some danger now of a rebureaucratization of education systems around the world, and this is an important implication of the movement to introduce mass standardized testing into school systems, which seems to me very much a modernization of the old public examination system. I emphasize the historical experience of the way that kind of control over schools tended to narrow the curriculum and to make school systems less adaptable to the needs of what are in fact quite diversified populations that the school systems are now dealing with.

The last two points I want to make relate to the social groups and social interests that are involved in education systems. It is a point that has emerged particularly strongly in research on education in the last two decades. I would claim it to be probably the most important finding of sociological research in education in this period; that is, curriculum, which is, after all, the crux of any education system and any program of reform, does have differential social effects. Particular kinds of curricula do, in fact, serve the interests of particular social groups better than other social groups.

We have a kind of academically derived curriculum which can be shown historically and sociologically, I think, to serve the interests of advantaged social classes more than it serves the interests of disadvantaged classes. There is now a body of research showing ways in which particular kinds of curricula, curricula construct-

ed in particular kinds of ways, tend to suit the interests of men rather than of women. There are problems in multicultural education, which I guess you are as familiar with as we are in Australia, and so on.

These are extremely difficult issues. By and large, our experience in Australia is that official inquiries into education tend to dodge them. Curriculum is the one issue you will find consistently left out of the agenda of major education inquiries in our country. I think that is one reason in fact why levels of social inequality in the education systems, inequality as between social groups, have not changed very much over the last generation or so despite major efforts at reform. It seems to me quite important to consider ways in which curricula can be designed that might have more equal and democratic effects. There is a certain amount of experience in doing that kind of thing.

Finally, since this is a subject of my current research—it is very much in my mind—I would like to recall the issue of education for children in poverty, an issue that came very much on to the educational agenda in the 1960s in North America, as in our country. It has tended to go off the television screen of education politics in the last 10 years or so, not because it was solved but perhaps because it was not solved and people moved on to easier issues.

I suggest that the way an education system deals with the problem of poverty, that is, with groups of children who have the least social resources and who are therefore, in a sense, most dependent on the public education system, is kind of a litmus test of its excellence.

That is probably enough from me.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. I was glad Mr. Johnston came in during the latter part of your comments about poverty in education, because I have detected over the months that he has a very keen interest in this area. I think he feels, as you do, that the children who are in poverty may have education as their only window of opportunity.

I am going to open up for questions from members now. Mr. Reycraft.

Mr. Reycraft: I wonder if I could go back to your opening comments. You indicated that there was a current public debate and review of the educational system in Australia. Without getting into any great detail, can you give us some indication of the nature of that debate and what it is they are focusing on at this time?

Dr. Connell: Yes. In fact, if you are interested in following it up, I can get the relevant documents for your research staff.

It has been focused in the last year with the advent of a new federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training, who came in with a bit of a run-on, a bloke called John Dawkins—he had previously been largely concerned with economic policy and had been part of a move within the government which has been attempting an economic restructuring and has been concerned with the conditions for the production of a labour force which would sustain a new program of industrialization, since part of its diagnosis of our economic woes is a crisis in the industrial sector.

He came in with a particular concern for the ways in which the education system might support a program of economic restructuring. That ran him into potential trouble—this is a Labour government—with significant parts of his own party's support, because that kind of argument about the education system, in the past, has generally been associated with business interests and with demands to produce a workforce which is literate and will do what it is told, more or less.

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The outcome of that was a set of policy initiatives which tried to combine the idea of an education system which would be more responsive to economic needs with an education system which was also more responsive to the demand for social equity, to strike a balance, in effect, between the two kinds of demands. The equity side of it at the moment is in fact rather more rhetorical than the other one, and that is a common point of criticism as to these policy developments, but that is the balance that is trying to be made.

A very interesting set of discussions has been going on between the federal government bureaucrats and the politicians in that area and the trade union organizations around the involvement of trade unions in the formation of workforce education policy. That is the shape, political and strategic, of the debate. It is still at the level of generalized policy documents, but eventually it will trickle down to the schools and colleges. We are awaiting that with great interest.

Mr. Reycraft: I assume that the policy proposals by this new Minister of Education were in response to some kind of public pressure to change the system, to overhaul the system, to make it more responsive to the needs of the business community. Is that the case?

Dr. Connell: That is an interesting point, because there had not in fact been that kind of

pressure in the recent past. There had been a debate along those lines some years back; I suppose about six or seven years ago there was a debate of that shape. That pressure particularly came from business and was addressed then to what was a Conservative national government, which did very little in response.

In this case, the initiative came not so much from a public demand but from the imperatives of the policy development within the government itself around economic restructuring. It was realized, I think, that the devices of purely economic policy were insufficient for a major program of growth. Much as policymakers did 80 years ago or so when they began introducing technical education systems, they sort of reasoned back to the need for a more flexible and differently educated workforce.

Mr. Reycraft: If I could switch to a different topic, one of the issues this committee is examining at the moment is the matter of streaming students in secondary schools. Are you familiar with the practice?

Dr. Connell: I am very familiar with the issue. I have, of course, only a visitor's knowledge of the Canadian details.

Mr. Reycraft: Is the system in Australia similar in that it allows students to be divided into different levels of difficulty in the secondary school system?

Dr. Connell: No. If I could take, for instance, the New South Wales system, which is the biggest education system in Australia and the one I am most familiar with, we do not have that kind of division of curriculum, in effect that stratification of curriculum, as a feature of policy across the whole system. What we have is a set of selective devices at the top end of the secondary system; that is, matriculation, examinations and a moderated certificate at the end of the fourth year of secondary and then at the end of sixth year, which is partly internally examined and partly standardized. The schools in effect stream themselves according to local decisions about how they want to handle those problems.

The policy of the system as a whole is notionally against streaming. It is not a very strong policy, but in so far as there is a system-wide policy, it is in favour of comprehensivization. But the schools have a lot of latitude to stream themselves, and they tend to do that by setting, that is, by streaming classes in each subject separately. This is secondary schools, of course.

There is a lot of variety. Some schools do actually refuse to stream and carry through a sort

of comprehensive policy quite systematically. It is an area that is quite a hot potato in Australia at the moment, as it is here, with some pressure from the new government in New South Wales to stream more vigorously.

Mr. Reycraft: The streaming of classes by subject is what is supposed to happen here. We know that not everywhere does it happen that way, but when you say that some schools just refuse to do it, is that what you mean: that they refuse to stream by subject as well?

Dr. Connell: That is right, and there is nothing that can force them to stream if they do not want to.

Mr. Reycraft: When you talked about matriculation examinations, is that a standardized test within the state or across the country? I am sorry; I am not very familiar with the system.

Dr. Connell: That is all right. No, it is not a standardized test. It is called a higher school certificate. It is a set of subject-by-subject tests which are conducted in the individual schools but are moderated as between schools.

There is a degree of standardized testing underlying the awards that a particular school can make. When it is marking on the curve, in effect each school is told as a result of some testing of the kids before the final exams what range of results they can give in that particular subject, and it is then basically up to the school to determine the ranking of its pupils in that particular subject area.

There is then an aggregation of marks—this is at matriculation level—in the different subjects, which is standardized in a particular way to produce a single score which is then used by universities and colleges to select students for particular areas.

That, of course, is the crux of the whole thing because that is the point of pressure, which then forces the curriculum further down the secondary school system to focus on that final exam, if the kids are to get into the programs of their choice at tertiary level.

Mr. Reycraft: Do you have any idea how the percentage of students who go on to post-secondary education in Australia compares to the percentage that does here?

Dr. Connell: Less than half. We have a very low progression level to tertiary education—quite striking.

Mr. Reycraft: It is a fascinating subject, Madam Chairman. Perhaps we should all have accompanied the Speaker on his visit there last week or the week before.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is not the answer. I have the answer.

Mr. Reycraft: I thought you might have another suggestion, Mr. Johnston.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Reycraft, are you hinting that we all travel to Australia to—

Mr. Reycraft: I think that is what Mr. Johnston is hinting.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Perhaps I should lead the fight on that one.

Madam Chairman: Just before we go to Mr. Johnston, Dr. Connell, I would like to introduce you to Dr. Bob Gardner, our researcher. I think he would like to speak to you after your presentation, if that would be all right.

Dr. Connell: Delighted.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: To make travel plans.

Madam Chairman: To make travel plans; that is right.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I apologize, Dr. Connell, for coming in late. Other matters kept me away. I have heard a lot about you through a mutual acquaintance, George Martell, and I have been very anxious to have you before the committee.

I thought we were going to come up with some recommendations on streaming, but it seems to me that the more we learn, the more we have to understand that we need to know more. The obvious answer now is that we cannot have one guest come and tell us all about streaming in Australia. We really do need to travel, and I will talk to the steering committee about this. Especially in January or February; I think this could be an ideal moment for the school system at that time.

Dr. Connell: I am sure we could arrange it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The whole committee, of course, the House leader reminds me; not the steering committee. That is an important point.

I did want to thank you for concentrating on looking at social outcomes as part of our educational aims, because all our goals for education in Ontario—I do not know if you have seen the 13.

Dr. Connell: I have seen the document, yes.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They are all individualist and there are no stated social outcome expectations at all, which I think allows us to evade the issues of the poverty trap too easily for it to fall off the political agenda on a regular basis. So I am really pleased you raised that issue.

You talk about having a provincial or geographical kind of tactical look at issues of education and poverty. Where could you point us to look at approaches, models which have been used which have been successful in changing the outcomes? We have had some inner-city attempts here in the city of Toronto and in Ottawa, for most of which we have not seen long-term studies, but which do not seem to have the kind of effect we wanted with the schools being much more connected to the community than previously, smaller class sizes, that kind of thing. Can you talk a bit about models that have been used to stop the problem of streaming later on by getting to the kids early, etc.?

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Dr. Connell: I would want to say, first, that one of the reasons it is difficult to find clear-cut examples of poverty programs in education which have worked, which have, so to speak, substantially changed the pattern of outcomes, is that most poverty programs in education are far too small. They simply do not have the clout to have large effects. I might instance that with the major poverty program in Australia, the disadvantaged schools program, which I will certainly supply you some material on, which was set up in the heyday of social reform in our country in the early 1970s and resulted in quite a substantial injection of federal funding into schools with geographical concentrations of poverty.

It first selected the poorest 14 or 15 per cent of children to concentrate on, which of course is much too small as any kind of estimate of the number of children who are disadvantaged in terms of socioeconomic inequality. But if you have a limited amount of money and you want to focus it, one figure is as good as another.

It then calculated the level of funding for those children in terms of adding to the recurrent budget of each school some—from memory—12.5 per cent, which was calculated as the amount of money necessary to produce any detectable change at all. In effect, it funded to produce the minimum visible change in school life. If you fund at that kind of level, you just cannot expect dramatic effects. You can expect local effects; that is, if your program then engages the interest and enthusiasm of a group of highly dedicated teachers, as this program has in some parts, you may get dramatic changes in particular schools, but you cannot rely on that across the whole system.

Where that program has worked, and it has worked very well in certain parts of the country—for instance, in part of Sydney which is

called the eastern metropolitan region—it has produced a very lively involvement of teachers in the management of new programs. It has in effect bypassed the bureaucratic structures which are so much a part of our problem and engaged teachers and parents in generating locally designed programs, locally controlled programs—of course, financially monitored by the system authorities. In situations like that, it has actually generated an enormous amount of energy around a school. When that kind of thing happens, you likely get good education more or less regardless of what the particular issue, what particular program you are pursuing, because a lively engagement of that kind tends to feed out to the morale of everybody in the school.

One can point to local successes of quite a dramatic kind. While I have not had the opportunity to go into schools here, I would be surprised if you did not have the same kind of story here. But the policy-level problem, of course, is how you generalize that from particular schools or particular education agents to a system. So far, no systems I know of have really solved that one.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One last thing: One of the issues that continually comes up with educators who work in inner-city schools is the difficulty of involving the family and the separation of family from the school, at least the middle class in the elementary panel here. None of our programs have focused enough on how you involve those parents. Besides all the problems with fatigue and feelings of alienation that those parents have anyway, there is the issue of just how much real power is given to them to make any decisions that then create that kind of excitement you are talking about. Has there been much work done in terms of studying that kind of model where, with regard to decisions over local curriculum and those kinds of things, real power is given to parents and what kind of difference that makes?

Dr. Connell: Yes, there is some very interesting Australian experience in that area in another state, Victoria, on which I can find you some material, where the disadvantaged schools program became the vehicle, in effect, of parent involvement in educational planning at a level that the system had never allowed before. Of course, there was always parent or community participation at the political level, through parliamentary structures. You have the school board level too, which we do not have in Australia. The crucial thing is for this to happen at the local and district level.

There is now some quite interesting experience about the way that can be made to work, through the devolution of power over appointments and over at least certain kinds of funding. Another quite important point, I suppose, is the kinds of support mechanisms that are necessary for parent and community participation, since, especially in poor districts, you cannot expect parents to walk in off the street and run a school. Most parents in those districts are quite frightened of the schools. Typically, they had a bad experience at school in their own childhood. There need to be some quite substantial support mechanisms in terms of in-service and community organizing. There is now some track record of that kind of thing. One can now point to some 10 years of experience doing this kind of thing in some parts of Victoria, with quite impressive levels of local participation as a result.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is disappointing to know that a trip straight to Sydney would not work and that we would have to go to Victoria and other places as well.

Dr. Connell: You would have to go to Victoria as well.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I do not think we should be daunted by that, I really do not.

Mr. Leone: Dr. Connell, I want some explanation of the two points you are emphasizing in your presentation. Actually, you are against the reintroduction of public examinations. You call that “rebureaucratization” and you say: “The nostalgia for a single measurement system poses a serious threat to the capacity of education systems to meet the needs of actual populations.” On the second one, what are the serious threats to the capacity of the education systems?

Dr. Connell: What I have in mind there is the logic on which a centralized testing and measurement system works, which is essentially that it supposes there is a single set of skills or capacities in the children which can be measured and that you can array each child on a scale of excellence in terms of arithmetic knowledge or command of language or whatever. The logic of a centralized measurement system supposes that there is a single scale for a given skill on which you can rank people, and the tendency—and here I am arguing on historical experience—of a centralized measurement system is to produce, in effect, a narrowed and centralized curriculum, because naturally the schools teach to the testing system. That always happens.

Whenever you have a testing system—at least, one that has any effect, and most of them do in terms of selection, streaming and so forth—then it is rational for the schools to teach to the testing system. The problem with that is that the actual populations a large school system like yours is dealing with are very diversified. They are culturally diversified, you have a large range of ethnic groups, there are rural and urban populations, there are people with different social class backgrounds with different cultures, there are men and women and boys and girls who have different kinds of backgrounds in cultural formation.

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You are trying to design an education system to deal with and suit a highly diversified population. If you are introducing to the central core of that education system a mechanism which narrows the curriculum in quite a drastic way, then I would argue that you are reducing the adaptability and flexibility of your system in quite a serious and potentially dangerous way.

Mr. Leone: Okay, that is still to be discussed. I believe that for a young person it is necessary to have a core education, and everything else must be subsidiary to that main education.

Anyway, another thing I want to ask is about the system in Australia. Do the universities have standard requirements for entrance, or are they open to everybody, regardless of academic grades obtained in high school?

Dr. Connell: There are two answers to that. Notionally, they have standards for entry—a certain aggregate, for instance, at the matriculation level examination. In practice, the selectiveness of the universities depends on the funding they get and the pressure for entry at any point in history. A few years ago, when the pressure for entry to tertiary education had slackened, had fallen off, the universities admitted anyone who wanted to come in. People who did not have the formal qualifications, in terms of a certain aggregate in the higher school certificate or equivalent, could be admitted as provisional matriculants or under adult matriculation regulations and would then be left to sink or swim in the first year. At present, when university funding is tighter and there is more demand for entry from young people, the standards are enforced and it is much more difficult now for people to get into universities by what used to be regarded as one of the side doors.

Mr. Leone: So students now must be competitive to enter university?

Dr. Connell: That is right.

Mr. Leone: What kind of standards do you have now to measure the students coming from the high schools? For example, here we have two systems, the separate and the public systems. Sometimes you can see a difference. A student in a public school might obtain a higher grade in a public school than in a separate or special school. We measure the students by the grades they obtain, and then the universities apply them. You can see that some students, because they have been attending a private school with stricter standards, will not be able to enter university. What is the solution you have for that if you do not want a public examination, which probably at that point would bring the students according to their capacities?

Dr. Connell: A variety of proposals have been made as to how to select. The response I would make to that issue in Australia is principally to ask, should you be selecting at all? I query the rationality of a system that excludes people at the point of entry to the tertiary level and would argue that is a policy mistake our system is currently making. But if you have to select—and given the institutions and the financial level at a given point, you may have to—there are a number of alternatives to the idea of a single, say, common examination or common scale of marking.

There are systems that involve qualitative assessment of unsuitability for a particular program, rather than one's ranking in an overall entry to a whole institution. That is done by some parts of our university system, not all. For instance, the medical school at the University of Newcastle—and medical schools, by and large, are among the twitchiest about questions of entry standards—has long run a program, in effect, of qualitative assessment of the suitability of candidates for medical training, which seems to have worked quite well. They have some experience in this and seem to be able to assess reasonably well the suitability of people for that kind of professional training without recourse to the common standard system.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Dr. Connell, on behalf of the committee. We have found the information you gave to us very helpful in our pursuit of the review of the organizational system in Australia. There are some similarities in the way we are going and, certainly, some points you have raised have given us cause for thought.

Dr. Connell: Thank you. I hope to welcome the committee to Australia in the near future.

Madam Chairman: You are not the only one.

Our next presentation will be by the Ontario Federation of Symphony Orchestras. Welcome to our committee. We are sorry you have been delayed in making your presentation. Sometimes we get very interesting presentations and we do run somewhat overtime; so we appreciate the fact that you have very patiently waited for us. We have allocated one half-hour for your presentation time. We are hoping that perhaps the first half of your presentation time will be with your oral presentation, leaving the remaining 15 minutes for questions from the members. Please begin whenever you wish and perhaps you would start by introducing yourself for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS

Mrs. Alexander: Thank you, Madam Chairman, and the other members of the committee. We very much appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today. I am Andrea Alexander. I am president of the Ontario Federation of Symphony Orchestras for a two-year term. I am also a member of the board of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. With me I have Betty Webster, who is the executive director of the Ontario Federation of Symphony Orchestras and the Association of Canadian Orchestras, and John McDougall, the past president of OFSO, who is also the past president of the Kingston Symphony Orchestra and is an elementary school principal.

I would like to take this opportunity to say, if you do not quite get a chance to go to Australia, you might take a small break and go to hear the orchestra in your riding.

The Ontario Federation of Symphony Orchestras has for the past 33 years been a vigorous and articulate voice for the 70 orchestras, ensembles and youth orchestras in Ontario. While much of our effort is involved in professional development and in government relations, our focus has increasingly turned to support for youth orchestras and the audience development activities of our member orchestras.

The symphony orchestra in many communities has been one aspect of the music programs in our schools. Each year, most school children are offered at least one opportunity to attend a symphony concert, if there is an orchestra in their community. Many orchestral managers and their boards strive to maintain a good working relationship with their local school boards. To our credit, there are very few schoolchildren in Ontario, even in remote communities, who could

not be offered this opportunity through a reasonable trip by bus or as part of an orchestra's educational tour.

In many communities, small ensembles from the local orchestra provide further opportunities for schoolchildren to rub shoulders with our province's artists. Unfortunately, these occasions continue to form a very small part of our symphony orchestra season. The orchestra's main program remains the major series season for its subscribers and its patrons. School boards allocate very small amounts of money to permit orchestral performers to come in contact with the schoolchildren.

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Speaking selfishly for a moment, the relationship between the symphony orchestra and the Ministry of Education, through the local boards, is one of the avenues through which orchestral music will continue to exist. The success of school music programs will guarantee performers and audiences for our future.

The orchestral community is working hard. Courses are now being offered, sponsored by the Ontario Federation of Symphony Orchestras, the Ontario Arts Council and the Ministry of Culture and Communications, to provide musicians with skills that will make their in-school and community performances more effective. Young musicians are receiving instruction in audience development and stage presence. The arts are the fourth-largest employer in this province and a major industry in the province's economy. We in that industry are concerned that young people in our schools are not receiving the consistent, continuous developmental training in the arts, and music in particular, necessary for them to take their places in our orchestras and concert halls.

This preamble explains why OFSO is concerned, but our interest goes further. We are also informed mothers and fathers of young people in the education system. We are aware of the rich and necessary role that music and the arts must play in a child's life. We are here not only to comment on the OSIS program and semestering, but also to offer our support to a fresh, concerted program, in concert with the Ministry of Culture and Communications and the Ministry of Education and the artistic community, to put the arts into their proper place in our schools.

Our children are being cheated by the fact that the arts represent one out of 30 hours of the high school curriculum. The goals of education in Ontario include "helping each student to acquire the basic knowledge and skills needed to

comprehend and express ideas through words, numbers and other symbols." Students are also to be helped "to gain satisfaction from participating and from sharing the participation of others in various forms of artistic expression." The practice and coaching needed to achieve the performance level for these goals cannot be achieved in the duration of one credit in a child's high school career.

In fact, the number of children who are now taking music across the province has risen since OSIS. This increase is explained by the fact that hundreds of students now must take an arts credit. The truth is, however, that almost all of this increase is in courses such as keyboard, guitar and steel drum, all taken in years 1 and 2. There is some growth in the keyboard, computer and electronics fields in years 3 and 4. These courses do offer experiences which can be satisfying over the short term. String, orchestral and ensemble development have suffered dramatically since 1984. School music teachers must now, of necessity, be preoccupied with short-term and not long-term goals.

The efforts have not been without success. Teachers and school boards have been very creative in developing and implementing programs for basic-level students. This had been a weakness over the years. At the same time, however, advanced-level students, especially if they have chosen the fast track, have not been able to include a developmental arts selection as part of their program. After choosing compulsory courses, OACs and their prerequisites, there is little room for the arts. Although up to two compulsory credits may be replaced by additional courses from the list of compulsory credits, this option is not advertised or encouraged at the school level. Students and parents are reluctant to choose additional music courses, as music is not accepted as a requirement for most university courses and decisions have to be made about subject choices very early in the child's high school career.

Music-making is a social experience. The decline of the ensemble music program has been reflected in the loss of many of our extracurricular ensembles which were such an important part of our music education. Band, choirs, orchestras, glee clubs and the like are simply not available for young people in most communities outside of the school.

Programs with short-term goals, such as guitar, may provide for lifelong enjoyment of an instrument, but do not lend themselves to the kind of large-group, social experience which

made such a difference to so many of us during our school lives.

These experiences are becoming more available for the talented few through the growing number of art schools, but music is what people do, not just what professionals or the talented do. IQ and talent have little to do with the ability of each of us to learn the skills and understanding of music as an art. The decline of the developmental program hits smaller schools in smaller communities much harder because of their limited ability to carry smaller-subscribed courses.

This hits particularly in the area of string instruction. String programs are still healthy in schools where children have started in elementary school, have fine teaching and there is a tradition that has been unchanged by demographic shifts.

The semester system has, except in enlightened areas, compounded the problem. It simply does not make sense to study the violin from September to January and then stop instruction until the next September or even the following January. The extracurricular ensemble may try to maintain interest and growth, but experiences over the past four years have indicated that this Band-Aid approach has been generally unsuccessful.

Alan King's recent report on secondary school staff found that arts teachers are the hardest working and most stressed of all staff. This is understandable. Their commitment to the ensemble is undeniable. They are faced with the task of combining students from all levels, grades and ages who have experienced a large variety of instruction time.

It is an administrative, social and musical nightmare. It has worked only in schools with committed administration and long histories of the string musical program, where half-credits and ensemble credits are used to creatively bridge the gap from semester to semester.

The social aspects of music-making are further eroded by the semester system. Students who are of like mind will include music in their program. Unfortunately, they may never see their colleagues from music class in any other class throughout the day. We strongly support a more developmentally designed curriculum in grades 9 and 10 which will allow the social bonding and support that children at this age so much require.

The minimum instructional times in grades 7 and 8 are being constantly eroded by external forces. We have listed some of the topics that are recently newly mandated guidelines in the school. Music classes are often, at this level,

semestered. The year-end musical or the Christmas concert becomes the basis of the program. In the last ministry review of the intermediate division, it was revealed that almost 30 per cent of schools had no music instruction at all.

When we look for Ministry of Education guidelines for the intermediate and senior divisions, our only reference is a 1976 document which certainly does not reflect the changes and research in this field that have taken place in the last decade. The new guideline has been in the development process for five years.

Documents have a strong positive influence. They indicate a strong mandate from the ministry. They update educational philosophy and provide detailed guidelines for all administrators and staff. The evaluation procedures and practical suggestions give a new meaning and importance to the subject area.

The 1970s and 1980s have seen an unprecedented growth in the arts of this province. Since 1966, Ontario's 13 orchestras have become 53. The Ontario Arts Council support grew from \$135,000 to \$3 million plus. In 1985-86, the Ontario Arts Council processed more than 3,000 grants across some 90 granting programs, for expenditures of \$21 million plus. In 1981, arts-related employment in Canada was almost as large as employment in agriculture or the federal government.

The performing arts audience in Ontario in 1986 was estimated to be 2.8 million. From 1961 to 1981, the Canadian fine arts audience rose from 1.4 million or 12 per cent of the Canadian population to 5.1 million or 28 per cent of the population. With 35 per cent of the national population, Ontario has 46 per cent of the arts activity. The provincial economic impact of the arts industry is indicated as being \$6.8 billion.

The Macaulay commission showed dramatic public support for the arts. Records, tapes and compact disc sales are at an all-time high. In short, our society's attitude towards the arts is very positive. We are now, however, faced with the possibility of most of our young people, some with minimal and others with no training in aesthetics, being totally limited to only commercial music. The prospect is frightening.

We have included a quote from Professor Bennett Reimer, who is a music educator of international reputation, presently based at the University of Illinois.

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We, the Ontario Federation of Symphony Orchestras, make the following recommendations:

In general: That the Ministry of Education's position on the arts, as articulated in curriculum documents, should be more successfully communicated to school boards and more consistently implemented;

That school boards and schools should make a firm commitment to the implementation and maintenance of resources to enhance arts programming policies;

That school boards make full use of community resources to enhance arts programs; and

That better dialogue on arts education issues should occur between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture and Communications, the faculties of education, the educational community, teachers' federations, the artistic community, parents and students.

On curriculum: That the Ministry of Education complete the implementation of the intermediate/senior music guideline;

That the Ministry of Education and school boards consider a more developmentally designed curriculum in grades 9 and 10 which will help students to build programs from areas of study, make a more sensible bridge from grade 8 and provide grade 7 to OAC music and arts education which emphasizes knowledge and skills, including history, listening and creative endeavours;

That the number of compulsory arts credits be increased to at least two, and the substitution clause be increased to allow maximum flexibility of course selection; and

That the ministry dramatically increase its programs in conjunction with the Ministry of Culture and Communications and the Ontario Arts Council to support and enhance the arts in our schools.

On semestering: That the Ministry of Education recognize the failure of the semester system to provide meaningful music and arts education and communicate to school boards and principals ways and means of adapting their organizational plans to accommodate this responsibility.

We again express our appreciation for the opportunity to speak before the committee. Mr. McDougall and Mrs. Webster are ready to answer your questions.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Mahoney): That is leadership. Thank you very much for that presentation.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We have had a number of pretty good presentations from the arts community, specifically around music and the problems with the system at the moment in terms of dealing with music adequately. We appreciate

your adding to the information we have received.

I have just a couple of things for clarification. On your item that the compulsory arts credits be increased by at least two, we have had a lot of people coming before us saying there are not enough optional credits for people at the moment, especially if you happen to be in a French immersion course and that kind of thing. That takes away five more credits—the Catholic system, with religious education, two credits—and if possible, they are now asking for four. Where does the child go with options?

I guess I wanted to know, when you saw us moving to two compulsory arts credits, whether you see this taking away from some other mandatory credit or see this adding an extra mandatory credit in terms of the kinds of options and the reduction then that takes place with these.

Mr. McDougall: I think we saw it as adding another compulsory credit.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The difficulty that that provides—not to pick on music here or arts in this case—in the addition of another one is that in some schools a student could maybe only have as few as five optional credits in his or her whole high school career. That becomes problematic, it seems to me, in terms of the range of educational opportunity that is there for some students across the province.

However, I am not arguing that arts should not be one of the compulsory credits. I think the point that was made by a symphony leader in Ottawa about the importance of music as a language and as part of our society, as you were saying, is that it is not being diminished at the moment at all but is being enhanced in terms of participation by people, at least on the listening end of things. That is important to recognize, yet we have diminished so significantly the role of music within the education system, seemingly. I am not saying we should not be adding. I am just wondering if maybe there is not something else you would give.

The other end of things is your concern at the elementary panel level, the intermediate classes of grades 7 and 8 being crowded in now with all the other kinds of things, the AIDS education reference, etc. What do you see as the solution at that end for your concerns? I did not notice you dealing with that specifically in your recommendations.

Mr. McDougall: Our experience has been, with the OSIS reorganization, that much of the material that perhaps at one time was covered in the grades 9 and 10 level is now covered in the grades 7 and 8 level. We would like this

committee and any reorganization to look from grade 7 through to the Ontario academic course and be a little more cognizant of the kind of pressure that is on the grade 7 program.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: At the moment, are you happy or unhappy with the level of musical involvement at the grades 7 and 8 level across the province? Do you see the problem as being more severe at grades 9, 10, 11 and 12, or are you also trying to point to the beginning of the problem starting in grades 7 and 8? I was not really clear.

Mr. McDougall: The problem does start at grades 7 and 8. It is certainly much more severe in high school, but with the increase in the social responsibilities, I think the elementary schools feel, particularly at the grades 7 and 8 level, that we have a responsibility for literacy. So as other courses arrive, the language aspects of our schools stay exactly the same. The language requirements, the language time stays the same. Mathematics is sacrosanct. We are finding that the arts and physical education, which are, for me and for us, very important parts of a child's growth, are the areas that have to give.

I offer no glib responses, because I really do not have any, but we thought that in your deliberations we would like you to know that this is an area that is of equal concern to others. I do not mean just music; I mean the arts in general.

The Acting Chairman: I have no other questioners, but I would like, on behalf of the committee, to thank you for your brief and for taking the time to come before us this morning. As Mr. Johnston said, we have had a number of presentations from various aspects of the arts, particularly music, and it is an area that I am sure we will be discussing at some length when we get down to writing our report. Thank you very much for coming this morning.

Our next presenter is the Ontario Association of Deans of Education. Committee members were handed the exhibit this morning, number 190. We will have the representatives, Dr. Bordeleau and Dr. McLeod, come forward. Welcome to the committee this morning. Would you please, for the purposes of electronic Hansard, introduce yourselves and begin whenever you are ready. We are allowing a half-hour for your presentation and would like to include questions from committee members in that same time period. If you can restrict your comments to the first 15 or 20 minutes, that will leave us some time.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF
DEANS OF EDUCATION

Dr. Bordeleau: My name is Louis-Gabriel Bordeleau, and I will begin my comments immediately, if I may. I thank you very much for this opportunity.

I would like initially to look at basically the secondary school education experience today, zeroing in specifically on OSIS and streaming. I would like to confess that to deal with such a broad educational reality within the limits of a few minutes warrants at least both a sound sense of prudence and a clear acknowledgement that one takes on the risk of depicting reality without providing the necessary finer distinctions.

Moreover, in looking at any social institution, one is constantly forced to assess the gap which exists between the policies and orientations on the one hand and their degree of implementation.

In preparing those notes, I was attracted by making a bit of a historical perspective. The last 30 years have been marked by significant changes in the secondary school system in Ontario. To name a few landmarks, may I refer to the implementation of the Robarts plan, the presentation of the Hall-Dennis report, the creation in 1969 of French-language secondary schools, the ongoing fine-tuning of the educational objectives of the secondary school diploma, the presentation of legislation dealing with exceptional students and, more recently, in 1984, the approval of a new set of educational policies called OSIS.

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These major endeavours have been, in my view, inspired by some specific underlying assumptions: namely, to provide quality education; to promote a high regard for the valuing of the human person and his or her potentialities; to ensure a real degree of continuity between the elementary and the secondary school; to develop in students the clear understanding and acceptance that learning is a lifelong process and, finally, to increase the systematic linkages between school and the immediate and larger social and technological environments. Such assumptions or objectives are fundamental and far-reaching, but more fundamentally, are pursued and assumed by people, by individuals and groups of individuals, in real school settings.

Finally, on this aspect of implementation, one bears in mind some key aspects relating to language—ethnicity, region, socioeconomic differences—as they apply specifically to our own province.

It is within this historical perspective and within the particular social setting of the moment that one reflects on OSIS and its implementation being appropos.

One must also be aware of the real dangers of establishing simple causal relationships between specific educational policies and regulations and levels of academic and personal performance. It is obviously much more a question of a multitude of interacting factors that account for levels of quality in the educational experience.

The intent here is not to identify all the significant aspects of OSIS. May I deal with the following, specifically: the central objectives, the curriculum, and the learning and teaching experiences or streaming. In dealing with each one, I will attempt to refer both to orientations and to my perceptions of their degree of implementation.

If we look at the central objectives, they can be stated as follows: the development of personal independence leading to social responsibility in close co-operation with the family; the facilitation of the pursuit of post-secondary education; the preparation for the world of work, and the provision of an educational experience conducive to the fuller identification and actualization of the learner's potentialities.

The above emphasize the clear necessity of fostering the integral development of the young adolescent in the evolving social, cultural and technological contexts and of recognizing the fundamental importance of developing collaborative approaches between school, family, the workplace, post-secondary institutions and the elementary school.

If I could make just one point here, I remain strongly convinced, as an educator, that the central challenge or problem is to strive more forcefully at breaking down the solitudes or distances between the secondary school and the essential partners identified above. One must recognize, though, specific indicators of this increase in the interface, such as the process leading to the creation of the Ontario academic courses, the linkages between the school and the workplace through co-operative programs, and specific board and school initiatives aimed at increasing parent participation in the educational experience of the young. More initiatives must occur if a forceful and productive network is to be developed.

En bref, la redéfinition des éléments obligatoires et optionnels du programme scolaire de la neuvième à la douzième année ont voulu tenir compte de la nécessité des apprentissages essen-

tiels — des langues, des mathématiques, des sciences, des sciences sociales, des arts, de l'éducation physique — donnent lieu à une culture et à une formation générales importantes et qui, du même coup, éloignent du danger d'une spécialisation précoce et vite dépassée. Nous abordons ici tout le débat très actuel entre la formation générale et les éléments qui la composent et la formation spécialisée. C'est un débat qui a lieu présentement au sein d'un bon nombre d'universités canadiennes et nord-américaines qui se penchent sérieusement sur la question de l'importance de la formation générale dans les études « sous-graduées ».

I would like to indicate here that there is a very fascinating debate going on among universities in North America dealing with the importance of what we can call la formation générale, or the dangers of excessive early specialization. I would like to make reference to what is happening presently at Harvard and the colloquium taking place this weekend in Ottawa, involving Canadian universities and dealing with the importance of the general culture in undergraduate programs.

Le débat qui a lieu présentement doit, à mon humble avis, éclairer les preneurs de décisions, qui revoient périodiquement les disciplines essentielles et la mise en place de cette formation générale solide durant les quatre années du secondaire.

If we look at the learning experience and the teaching experience or streaming, it is certainly, in my view, easier to state that school programs must respect as much as possible the learner's individual differences than it is to devise a set of strategies and mechanisms which allow this to happen. In moving from principle to practice, OSIS has developed among other things the concept of streaming, thereby creating courses offered at three levels of difficulty we all know—basic, general and advanced—and one can also talk of the enriched level. OSIS emphasizes that such terms are to apply to courses and not to students. One cannot press this fine distinction strongly enough.

With regard to streaming, or the specific attempt to respect individual differences, may I present the following three observations:

The school experience and environment must allow adolescents to experience, understand and value the pursuit of educational goals which are seriously challenging and which contribute to the development of a strong image of self as a learner and as a person. In this context, the availability of courses which can truly challenge are necessary,

both for the individual and the establishment of a serious school climate.

Personally, I have witnessed, for example, that the creation of enriched courses in a specific high school in my area has had real positive effects on the students' attitude vis-à-vis academic excellence. There remains, though, a real danger of establishing a relationship between the level of difficulty of courses and the students' potential. This difficulty is even more serious when we are aware of the influence of teacher perceptions of student ability on student performance and teacher evaluation of this performance.

Finally, streaming will not of itself be the key ingredient to the success of the secondary school experience. I remain convinced that the most important key to this success lies in the quality of the teacher-learner relationship, where teaching does not force the learner to adopt solely a receptive or passive mode, but where the teacher and the learner are involved as partners in the learning experience.

Dr. McLeod: I am Robert McLeod. I am the dean of education at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay. I am pleased to be here before the committee with Dr. Bordeleau as a member of the Ontario Association of Deans of Education.

It is my intent to focus on the two aspects of promotion and semestering in the comments I will share with you at this time. I would like to underscore selected points made in the written brief and, hopefully, that will leave the remaining time for the committee to ask questions.

I will deal first with promotion and then semestering and then make a general concluding statement.

School promotion is a topic on which most of us have strong opinions. Most, if not all, have experienced this phenomenon and our opinions are tightly interwoven with equally strong feelings. However, I would note that there is little conclusive empirical evidence to demonstrate unequivocally the superiority of either a rigid grade standard policy or a continuous social promotion policy. Thus, in the light of inconclusive evidence that either extreme is best, we would urge a balanced approach which allows for continuous learner progress but takes account of both individual learning experience and performance standards.

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We also support the continuation of a policy which makes student evaluation an integral component of instructional programs and one which emphasizes optimum learner growth and

development, rather than an externally imposed, arbitrary, standard, definitive grade expectation culminating in grade promotion or failure. There is no clear evidence to support the discontinuation of the subject credit system currently in place at the secondary level with a return to grade promotion.

Flexibility in school organization is essential to allow learners to meet standards and to continue progress. It must be recognized that resources and alternatives for students who are not achieving established standards in the programs offered must be continued and made available to those students.

Moving to the issue of semestering, we would note that time is one of the most flexible resources available to educators in organizing their programs for delivery. Further, we would underscore that semestering is only one alternative in time organization.

The emerging research literature indicates that semestering does not necessarily enhance academic achievement, although it does appear to encourage a greater variety of teaching strategies which tend to have increased learner involvement.

Scheduling flexibility is most readily provided at the local level and cannot and should not be provincially mandated. Thus, we caution against a province-wide semestered system. Local administrators and teachers are best informed to make scheduling decisions within the guidelines of their respective systems and should be encouraged to do so and thus exploit the flexibility inherent in time to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the schooling they offer.

In summary, many words have been used in written briefs and in oral presentations to you, as committee members, but there are some particular words which merit the committee's careful attention as you deliberate and make recommendations regarding the future directions of education in the province. These are "integration," "balance" and "flexibility" in the pursuit of educational excellence.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Mrs. O'Neill: I would like to go back to Dean Bordeleau's comments, which begin on folio 4 and I think are explained further on folio 5. Those are the comments about enrichment. We have had very few groups or educators included who have brought forward that concept. It seems the three levels of basic, general and advanced have been accepted, with varying opinions on each of

those, but enriched is beyond that, I presume. You are stating it in that fashion.

What I would like to know first of all, because you are from the faculty of education, is whether there is any preparation of students who will become teachers to do that kind of programming and how you see that programming fitting in with the structured system we have. As I understand it, the regulations insist that even if they are studying at the enriched level, they are marked at the advanced level. Could you tell me a little bit about what you are doing in the faculty, since you seem to be encouraging this?

Dr. Bordeleau: The reason I wanted to make reference to enrichment was that I had the opportunity of seeing, as I mentioned in the notes, some specific examples of that in a few schools in the Ottawa area and to listen to students who were involved in enriched programs.

Mrs. O'Neill: Can I interrupt you? Would that be in the segregated gifted program you are talking about or congregated gifted program?

Dr. Bordeleau: The two instances I was thinking of are segregated, at least more highly segregated in the first two years of high school and then become more integrated in the years 12 and OAC.

There were two effects I was noticing. One I suppose I would see as positive is that it developed a greater acceptance of the importance of performing well. I think there can also be a culture in schools that defeats the importance of succeeding, while the advent of these programs—I sense that in two of these schools in particular—enhanced the importance of doing well academically. Obviously, the second aspect, which might not be as positive, is that the students were sharing that they were perceived as being very different, as being separate, as being quasi out there in left field.

Finally, coming back to the initial comment concerning teacher education, it is interesting that at this moment the provinces or the ministries are about to receive a document on the necessary reforms concerning teacher education. In the current initial phase of teacher preparation there is systematic emphasis on the importance of not only allowing for, but also respecting individual differences.

The whole concept of dealing with students in an integrated fashion is clearly there, but it is mostly as teachers come back for ongoing professional development that they can have access to programs that deal specifically with gifted education within the broader framework of

special education. Gifted education has really developed in the last six or seven years in this province, and from my understanding is going to remain quite a significant force.

Mrs. O'Neill: If I may clarify it then, these are congregated or segregated gifted classes when you are talking about enrichment. They would not be taking students who were, for instance, taking general-level math and doing an enriched English at the same time.

Dr. Bordeleau: In specific instances. For example, in one of the two schools I was thinking about, in grade 11 the student can take advanced French, English and history, and take enriched math and science. That is a possibility. There are obviously limitations in terms of flexibility of enrolment.

I guess my last comment is that when we look at enrichment, and it is one point I want to make, there is always such a great danger of establishing a correlation or an identification between the enriched program and the student. We are looking at programs and not necessarily tagging people within those programs.

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you very much for being so clear and for taking the effort to come before us.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would like to thank you as well for coming before us and sharing your thoughts with us today. I have a little difficulty, though, with some of the positions. I am not sure if you are pulling punches because of lack of consensus or because you actually believe in the middle-road approaches that you seem to be taking. In my mind, there seem to be some conflicts in what you are suggesting.

First, I find it strange that you suggest it is OSIS which has developed the concept of streaming, since we have had streaming around in one form or another since long before I was in high school. I found that a strange comment in some ways. The credit system was supposed, in theory, to provide flexibility for movement between what had been very hard and fast streams. Part of the problem we seem to be running into is that it has not done that. I first want to get your reaction on that because it seems to me that OSIS was in fact initially designed to develop a flexibility between streams that had not been there in the past. Do you agree or disagree?

Dr. Bordeleau: It was certainly not my intention to indicate that streaming was the creation of OSIS. I was trying to indicate that basically since the beginning of the 1960s, the province has tried to indicate the importance of

respecting individual differences. I guess the whole challenge is of providing systems that promote individual differences while being very cognizant of the evolving social and technological changes that are there. That is probably the central challenge of any system. It was not my intention to indicate that OSIS gave birth to streaming.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: The other thing that I find was not dealt with in that section is that while it is true there is a strong mythology out there about individualized programming and planning for students, in my view that masks a social grouping that takes place in our school systems, which the streaming process reinforces. Lower-income socioeconomic groups get streamed massively lower, and upper-income kids get streamed higher, almost invariably, according to any of the studies that have ever been done in Canadian circumstances. There are not many and most boards do not follow them.

There seems to be a denial of that reality, both in terms of the principles of what our education system should be doing—not leaving social groups stuck like it seems to have done over the last 40 years—and in terms of just what sorts of goals and changes we need to do in terms of the structures.

You do not seem to address that reality, that the people who get streamed into the vocational stream, the basic stream are, generally speaking, poor and disadvantaged groups. They are not a group of certain individuals who magically come from across the broad spectrum of society. I am surprised you do not deal with that issue. If I might be provocative, you seem to be taking part in the same masking that has been going on in our system for generations now, that this is not the reality. I would like to get your response after being provocative.

Dr. Bordeleau: If I could say something I was trying to stress in my presentation, the great fundamental problem is establishing systematic linkages between the school and out there. We talk about that all the time in the documents, the importance of interfacing between the family—the family in the evolving context, the immediate social context—and elementary school, secondary school and post-secondary school. Having been in education now for about 25 years, one thing that strikes me is that I think we tend to easily isolate ourselves in our subsystems. In other words, when universities deal with colleges, high schools or elementary schools, there is still the great difficulty of establishing

flexibility and constant linkages. I think we can say the same thing of school and the family, and school and society.

I am wondering if we do not simply keep on suspecting that these linkages will happen. I am really convinced there is a question of human resources, that a school cannot, just out of goodwill, be close to a community, close to families in need or close to students who are dropping out without reshifting the resources or even without increasing the resources.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I agree with you totally on that part of it, but when we are looking at the structures we set up in our system and at streaming, and at the homogeneous grouping of students and at who those kids are in really hard terms, it strikes me that maybe the message we are sending is opposite to one of the words you wanted us to use, which was "integration." Heterogeneous grouping, at least in a structural sense, is one approach, leaving aside, if we might, that major problem of how families, especially poor families, can be involved in the school system in a meaningful way. That is one of the things we need to deal with.

I do not have much time. You can wend your answer into your answer to my other question. In terms of what you are suggesting on semestering as an organizational thing, we have now heard arguments on both sides of this issue, as you expected us to do, as you say in your paper. We have heard some very dangerous comments about pedagogical problems that are there in the system for certain kinds of courses and we now know there are some school boards which are totally semestered.

I know Mr. Jackson has been raising this issue and because of his incapacitation with his cold, I will say this for him. The question that is coming up in our minds now is whether flexibility within a school board, not just the absolute decision-making that it can decide if it is going to be totally semestered but the need to have flexibility within a school board to account for some of these needs, requires us to say—we have computers and things that can give you flexible timetabling so that you can have a mixture of semestering and regular organized classrooms. From the provincial end of things, if there are these pedagogical problems with certain kinds of courses and certain kinds of groups, and how they deal with these kinds of courses and this organization of time, maybe we should be looking at whether the province should be saying that each school board must provide some kind of choice here, that you cannot have a totally semestered system.

I would be interested in your reaction to that because it seems to run counter to what you are saying.

Dr. McLeod: Perhaps I should check and find out what you think I am really saying there.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I thought you were saying it had to be left up to the local school board.

Dr. McLeod: I hear you saying that as well.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: No. I am saying that it is left up to them at the moment, but perhaps there is a role for the province to say that you must provide a choice within your system, that you cannot have an entirely semestered system.

Dr. McLeod: But not a mandated system. There must be flexibility. There must be choice. Two of my colleagues and I have just completed a study that is currently with the research office in the Ministry of Education regarding small secondary schools in northern Ontario and it is abundantly clear that scheduling is contextually sensitive. You have to find some way of providing options for students. Otherwise, students get caught in blind alleys. They get upset; teachers get upset; administrators get upset. I think what I was trying to say in my comments was that there is no one best way.

Therefore, if there is anything we need to be exploring, it is what are the best attributes or aspects of different organizations and then, at the local level where the energy and the actual happening takes place, allowing some creative thinking about it; in other words, not a semestered system, not a nonsemestered system, but let's look at time and see what we can really do with it in terms of being more efficient and effective.

If I might go back to streaming, I think that while OSIS certainly did not create streaming, it has enhanced and underscored—perhaps, with OACs, even more so—the downward movement of streaming, so streaming becomes an event that happens earlier. I think there is concern about that. I guess that if my reference to the word "integration" suggested to you heterogeneous classrooms, heterogeneous classrooms are not going to do away with the differences of ability, the differences of attitudes and the differences of interest which must be taken into consideration if teachers are going to be effective in helping learners to learn.

If I can leap back to Mrs. O'Neill's question about enrichment, I would hope that this committee would not be caught in the trap of thinking about enrichment hierarchically and putting enrichment above the advanced level.

Enrichment happens at a basic level for a student who is ready to go beyond and integrate and see relationship among wholes which the other students are not ready to do. Enrichment is not only vertical; it is also horizontal and therefore should happen for all students, I would hope.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would agree, but I do not know that we have seen much in enrichment programs within the basic-level schools or basic-level courses within composite schools. I would argue that perhaps a more heterogeneous kind of grouping would allow for that change. I would also argue with you on whether it changes attitude. I think there are many cases where integration of disabled people in the classes has significantly changed attitudes of both teachers and students to how individuals relate and to certain values which—

Dr. McLeod: But again, I guess I would caution—

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The Acting Chairman: Excuse me. This is a question period. We have other questioners. This is not an argument we are entertaining. I would like to move on to our final questioner, as our next presenters are patiently waiting. Mr. Miclash, if you could be as brief as possible, it would be appreciated.

Mr. Miclash: Sure. I am interested in what the faculties of education are looking for as far as teacher training goes. For entrance into the university in teacher training, what kind of people are you looking for? What academic standards and other qualifications might you be looking for?

Dr. Bordeleau: If I may just rapidly indicate two aspects, obviously academic performance is there, and with the immense degree of competition to get into teacher education programs that aspect has been in the forefront. We are also looking at profiles of individuals who in their past experience have indicated success in working with children and adolescents. We hope we are able to take into account both the academic profile and the experience profile in order best to predict success in a teacher.

Mr. Miclash: Normally, what would the academic standards be for a requirement? What are you looking for?

Dr. Bordeleau: By the way, if we are just looking at numbers, in individual institutions we were faced with about 2,000 to 3,000 applicants and we are receiving, at most, 25 per cent of those applicants. So we are looking at student averages that are well in the mid-70s and beyond.

The averages for applicants and admitted students have increased significantly in the past four or five years.

Dr. McLeod: May I make one brief statement? In addition, I would hope that you do not go away with the idea that all we look at is academic average.

Mr. Miclash: That is what I was going to ask.

Dr. McLeod: At Lakehead University, we also look at the composition of the undergraduate degree, the breadth of the experience in terms of disciplines studied at the elementary level and the appropriate depth of disciplines studied for the secondary level.

The Acting Chairman: Dr. Bordeleau and Dr. McLeod, thank you for your brief and for taking the time to be with us this morning. We are sorry we have to cut it a little short, but we do have other people waiting.

Mrs. O'Neill: Mr. Chairman, may I just mention to these gentlemen the apprenticeship program that is taking place with the North York Board of Education and the faculty of education of the University of Toronto. Are you aware of that? Maybe you will keep track of that and try it in your own faculties. It sounds like an exciting experiment.

Mr. Jackson: Mr. Chairman, would it be possible to request a copy of the report which is currently in analysis with respect to small northern secondary schools?

Dr. McLeod: That would have to come from the committee, Mr. Chairman, because we have completed our assignment. We have turned it over to the government and we can do nothing with it until a year is up.

The Acting Chairman: Perhaps we can refer that to our staff to see if it can be obtained. Thank you very much.

Our next deputation is from the Ontario Federation of Students: Shelley Potter, chairperson, and Joan MacNeil, researcher. Good morning and thank you for coming this morning. Would you begin by introducing yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard and begin your presentation whenever you are ready, recognizing that we would like some time for questions included in your half-hour presentation.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

Ms. Potter: My name is Shelley Potter and I am chairperson of the Ontario Federation of Students. With me is Joan MacNeil. She is the

researcher for the Ontario Federation of Students.

The Ontario Federation of Students is the organization that represents over 250,000 post-secondary students in Ontario. Campus student organizations become members of the OFS through democratic referendums held on their campuses, at which every student has the opportunity to vote.

Delegates from our campuses meet at two general meetings each year to plan activities and develop our policies and positions for committees such as this today. We also participate in an October lobby session, at which time we meet with provincial MPPs to discuss our concerns, so I hope to see you again individually during October.

The Ontario Federation of Students is opposed to the practice of streaming, so much so that our opposition is enshrined in our statement of principles. Although there are many different definitions of streaming, for the purposes of this presentation, the term "streaming" will be used to refer to those practices, both formal and informal, which result in the placing of students at the primary or secondary level in separate groups on the basis of alleged ability.

At this point in the history of education in this province, we wish to reaffirm our opposition to this practice and to propose alternatives which would enhance both the educational experience of the students and the educational outcome, that is to say, improve retention rates and close the gap in the achievement levels experienced by students from differing economic and social backgrounds.

We start with two assumptions. First among them is that any education system which produces significantly different outcomes according to the socioeconomic backgrounds of the students is failing in a very fundamental way. Intrinsic to this approach is the recognition that all the groups currently overrepresented in lower streams, for example, the children of working-class families, certain ethnic minorities, physically disabled students and others are, as groups, no less intelligent than the groups whose children are almost never placed in the less-able streams, for example, the wealthy.

Our second assumption is that, although absolute equality of outcome is not possible without absolute equality of condition—and the latter is clearly beyond the control of the school system—significant improvements in educational outcomes can and should be achieved through

changes in various elements of the educational experience.

First, let us focus on the nature and magnitude of the impact of streaming, both formal and informal, on the educational experience of Ontario students. It is readily apparent that streaming has an inordinate impact upon the achievement levels of low- and middle-socioeconomic status groups.

The impact of the formalized streaming practised at the secondary level is more readily measured than the impact of the informal streaming endemic at the primary level. An examination of the impact of streaming in the Toronto Board of Education, for example, indicates that among the highest socioeconomic status quartile of students, only 0.8 per cent of the grade 9 students were placed in the basic stream, whereas among the lowest socioeconomic status quartile, 18.4 per cent were placed there. This means that students of low socioeconomic status are 23 times more likely to wind up in the basic program than their wealthier peers.

Aside from the fact that students from this stream are totally, and for the most part permanently, excluded from any access to post-secondary education, the basic program seems designed only to churn out docile but punctual fodder for Ontario's low-waged, poor-working-conditions industries, for example, the hotel and fast-food industries. Understandably, students resist both the placement and the program offered. This resistance takes the form of truancy, behaviour problems and, most significantly, withdrawal from the program, as evidenced by the 79 per cent dropout rate.

This pattern is repeated in an only slightly less extreme fashion in the general stream. Although the general stream was allegedly designed to prepare students for community colleges, it has failed miserably in this task, with only 11 per cent of its graduates going on to a college of applied arts and technology, and only half of those successfully graduating from one. With a 62 per cent dropout rate, it is clear that this stream is not much of an improvement over the basic stream.

At the primary level, the streaming process is much more subtle, with a significant amount of in-class streaming. We have all seen the "robin" and "sparrow" reading groups and know what that means.

Both the informal and formal types of streaming are examples of an educational strategy which has profound weaknesses. This meritocratic approach to teaching and learning, which

is based on a philosophy of competitive individualism, is destructive because it divides students from one another, rather than strengthening their sense of collegiality and their sense of community. It creates false divisions, for example, between the "brains" and the "dumbos."

Moreover, it does not work, if in fact the true objective is to enhance the achievement level and self-worth of each student. Students whose previous record of achievement in school was lower than average do worse in these homogeneous groupings, and there is little evidence that the students who are already performing well improve their performance by being separated out.

Streaming can only be considered successful, in our opinion if its real objective is to replicate and inculcate acceptance of the power relations currently faced in most workplaces. At the same time, this approach denies, obscures and mystifies the real social divisions that do exist in our society. To that extent, not only is it inequitable but also diseducational, in the sense that it creates false perceptions where real insights might otherwise have been achieved.

There has always been considerable debate over the appropriate function and methods of the public school system. Business has encouraged the government to provide skills training and a little, but not too much, knowledge to the majority and, at the same time, to sift out and accredit a select few who would receive a broader education. This should be no surprise, since it corresponds to what it perceives as advantageous in the execution of its agenda.

Other sectors of the society, recognizing that "knowledge is power" is no empty slogan, have pushed for a school system that would attempt to provide a broad education to all. The fact that the school system is a subject of political debate is inevitable, since it is an arm of the government and, as such, its functions will always be subject to political struggle.

Several approaches to improving the educational outcomes of the majority have been suggested. One is to simply destream the school system on an official basis and have everyone move through a program similar to the current academic program. This solution alone does not address the difficulties encountered at the primary level, nor does it address the problems of motivation involved in trying to get students from families of low and average socioeconomic status to absorb academic, discipline-based knowledge because of both the power relations of its teaching and the abstractness of the content.

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Central to a more successful approach are curricula and texts which bear at least some relation to the reality experienced by most students and their families. Regional, class and ethnic differences make different Ontario schools very different places to learn and to teach in. Yet rather than these diversities becoming the subject of learning, they are handled in such a way as to result in the marginalization of various regions and groups.

For example, students in northern Ontario do not learn about the particular contribution of the north to the development of the provincial and national economy, nor about the metropolis-hinterland relationship they have with Toronto and New York. The textbooks used in the north are southern Ontario, or American for that matter, in orientation; that is to say, they are situated everywhere yet nowhere.

Where are the miners, the pulp-and-paper workers, the inland fishermen, the native trappers and the tourist camp operators who people the north? They are invisible in the textbooks, as are any discussions of major issues of vital interest to northern students and their families; for example, the reality of plant closures, relations between the white and native communities, the impact of pollution on the northern environment, the contrast between the rock-video music culture of the youth and the bingo hall and Canadian Legion bar culture of their parents, the particular relationship northerners have to the trains and roads that go through their towns and the big question of going south or staying put.

Ms. MacNeil: It is bad enough that these realities are not presented in the textbooks and discussed in classes across the province, for surely they are worthy of examination by all Ontarians. The effect on northerners themselves of being invisible to themselves in the cultural mirror which school texts and curriculum constitute is very serious. This could equally be said of the curriculum and text used in Windsor, for example, or any other part of Ontario.

This is true also about the ways in which ethnic diversity is handled in our schools. Rather than forming the basis for an enhanced, enriched learning experience about cultures other than our own—for example, other countries, their geography, the differences in why and how we all came to be here in Ontario, the experience of immigrants in the workplace, linguistic differences, all of which would be extremely interesting for both students whose families have been

here for only a few years and those whose ancestors came centuries ago—there is a flattening out, a greying of the various differences which have made our province what it is and which will continue to shape its cultural, social and economic life.

The existence of average working people is perhaps the most unrecognized of all in our schools. The curriculum and texts of Ontario schools are full of absences. To look at the average textbook, it would appear that nobody in Ontario has ever worked as a waitress, a garment worker, a miner, a bricklayer, a fruit picker, a paper worker, a secretary, a graphic artist, an auto worker, a window washer, a data processor or a railway worker. We do not think it is a coincidence that the real life and daily contribution of working people in our society is obscured, ignored and distorted.

Still less is there any mention of real work, unemployment, fear of job loss, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with wages or working conditions, changing technologies in the workplace, the cost of clothing, the challenges of finding and keeping decent accommodation and child care, the impact of integration of mothers into the workforce on family life and all the other situations which are so central to the experience of working-class majority students and their families. It is very damaging to students to be constantly presented with a vision of the world which denies their own experience and that of their parents.

Also conspicuously absent is any mention of the reality of the collective action on the part of working people and their allies to improve their situation. One should not have to go to university to learn about the history of trade union activity in our province and country, the struggles for health care, child care, unemployment insurance and laws protecting tenants, questions about the impact of high technology in the workplace, occupational health and safety issues, Canada's strong tradition in socially conscious documentary filmmaking, farmers' organizations and the various other livelier aspects of our society.

We are not suggesting that these topics be presented in a didactic manner but rather that they be integrated in a natural way into the study of history, math, geography, literature and other subjects. It is absolutely essential that we do not simply invert the traditional approach to education by trying to identify relevant knowledge for students from certain regions or ethnic or socioeconomic groups and to teach that new content in the same way that the traditional

academic knowledge has been taught. On the contrary, as important as the content are the pedagogy and the attitudes of teachers to the students and to the learning process.

Educators must valorize the students and their families, respect them and assist them in discovering and recovering their own history and future. Their sense of being subjects in their own personal and collective history should be reinforced, and they should be empowered as agents in that history by learning a broad range of skills.

What does this mean at the primary and secondary levels? This means giving up the "expert/passive recipient of knowledge" relationship common in the classroom. It also means giving up the attempt to sort alleged high achievers and low achievers into separate groups where they can be dealt the fate deemed appropriate to them. In short, it means an end to streaming and a beginning to a more empowering type of education.

What is needed is a shift to more co-operative, democratic forms of learning, not a back-to-basics emphasis on submission to authority and acceptance of the type of curriculum which in the past revealed itself as a contributor to low achievement levels and high dropout rates.

There are some who say that such changes will be of no use, that schools cannot make much of a difference and that working-class and minority students are doomed to achieve less within the education system. We reject this. Although living conditions and parental education levels can definitely have an impact on a student's performance in school, especially as the school experience is now structured, schools can make a difference.

Recent documentation on one very successful school is revealing. We have included in the report quite an extensive excerpt of a study of this school that was done by one of the professors at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and we urge you to take a look at it. I will briefly summarize the school population and the results that have been achieved there.

The school population shows all the characteristics that are generally linked to low achievement levels: over 90 per cent of the children living in public housing; a much higher than average percentage of children living below the poverty line; the highest percentage of all the schools in the province of children from single-parent homes; three quarters of the children born outside of Canada or with parents who have immigrated to Canada within the last decade. In short, it is a recipe for what most educators would

expect to be a disaster in terms of educational achievement. Yet the unexpected has been happening. The environment created at that school and the results achieved are very exciting. For that reason, we urge you to take a close look at the excerpt, if you have not already looked at it.

Briefly, to summarize, the grades 5 and 6 students in this school were observed at length by the professor and graduate students who were working with them over a period of months for several hours each week. They are designing their own games on computers and programming algorithms. They are writing complex essays and poetry. They are succeeding very well in the natural sciences, math, spelling. This is not because of high-tech computers being placed in the school. They have very modest computers. There is nothing particularly expensive involved in the program. It has more to do with the approach of the teacher to learning and the attitude of the teacher to the students and their families.

Also achieved, aside from the things I have already mentioned, were a marked improvement in the behaviour and academic achievement of students previously categorized as almost uncludable in the school system, those with serious behavioural problems; this over a very short period of time, a period of only three or four months. There is an implicit expectation of excellence but little discussion of excellence or "shoulds" in the school.

There is heterogeneous grouping. When the students work in groups, they work in mixed-ability groups. They are not sifted out into low-, medium- and high-ability students.

We want to identify specifically the elements in the above-described classroom which contribute to the success of the students and which we believe can and should be incorporated across the system.

1. High teacher expectations of all the children and a respectful, warm and caring attitude on the part of the teacher.

2. Delegation to all children, not only the most able, of the responsibility for complex tasks and assisting other children in the learning process;

3. Extensive attention devoted to art and physical activities;

4. Frequent contact with the world outside the school through various outings;

5. Co-operative rather than competitive learning, with regular interaction between students.

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I want to draw attention to that one in particular because that seems to be one of the main features distinguishing this school from other schools with lower levels of achievement. We think the competitive situation that is set up for children in the school is very destructive and does not bring out the best in children, that it creates winners and losers and it creates more losers than it creates winners. That is not the kind of world we think our children should be moving in.

6. Many of the lessons are converted into learning games.

7. There is active participation of children in discussions of all sorts.

8. Computers are not used in isolation. Lessons are planned to link computer activities with other learning activities on the same subject. The computers are used to encourage creative expression. Students write essays and poetry using the computers.

9. There is encouragement of creativity in the forms of poetry and essay writing, art and computer programming. The children's work is displayed all over the school.

10. Expression of feelings, observations and concerns of the children are actively encouraged.

11. Finally, the opportunities for interaction between the teacher and small groups of children are frequent.

The teacher apparently accomplishes this by taking groups of children aside and working with them while the others are playing with the computer. This has resulted in a really high level of achievement among a group of students whom, I think, our educational system has written off to some extent—the students, ethnic minorities, working class kids and students from single-parent families who, a lot of teachers and a lot of school boards think, just cannot rise to these levels of achievement.

This is the kind of environment we should be offering our students and the kind of expectations we should have of them and the type and manner of assistance which is most effective. We wish to draw particular attention to the fact that, contrary to the expectations of the back-to-basics supporters, a nonauthoritarian approach and art, music and poetry in the classroom do not detract from but enhance the learning of various subjects.

In conclusion, it is time to abolish streaming. It is unjust and ineffective and results in the stunting and waste of the intellectual potential of major segments of our population. There are effective means of improving the achievement level and the quality of the education experience

for all students. The means are available. Only the political will is necessary.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Ms. MacNeil. You have certainly presented one of the strongest commentaries today against streaming. I know a number of members have questions for you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am both surprised and delighted by the emphasis that the Ontario Federation of Students has taken here, to the exclusion of some other things you might have dealt with. I was not clear that it got itself around to being definitively opposed to streaming the last time I was involved.

Ms. Potter: We were just saving it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Excellent timing. From my perspective, the angle I come at streaming from, this has dealt with many of the issues I am interested in. So I am really pleased about that.

I am not sure whether you are the first or not to deal with the ideal school model notion, out of some of the work of Olson, Livingston and others. That is interesting to see.

I do not know whether this is possible to get from the ministry, but the notion of co-operative rather than competitive learning approaches and active learning styles has been promoted by the ministry for quite some time following the Hall-Dennis report. Anecdotally, I hear back from teachers that it is not used that much within the elementary panel. That is the only area in which it is really used, but it is not used that much. I am wondering if there is any information available either through studies that have been done maybe by people at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education or if the ministry has any information about just how active this kind of model is in Ontario at this point.

I know of some schools within the Toronto system where individual teachers use this approach, but I also know that a number of them feel very much under pressure to abandon it because it does not fit with what the rest of the school is doing or what the senior part of the elementary school is doing and that kind of thing. I would be very interested to know if we have any real indication of how much this kind of model is being used. It would be fascinating to know, although I presume we may not be able to get that information.

Madam Chairman: We can certainly ask the ministry if it has access to that type of information. I myself would be particularly interested to see whether they have it for the secondary schools, because I think the model you

have described is a mixed grade 5 and 6. I think you might be more prone to see that type of thing in the elementary school than in the secondary, and I would like to see if there is a comparative.

Ms. MacNeil: I think the difficulty some teachers may have in implementing it is that they have no experience of it themselves. If you have gone through the school system in Ontario, and I presume most teachers in Ontario have, you do not have the experience yourself of co-operative learning; so even though you might get a lecture or two about how to do it in your teacher training, you probably would not have much experience of what it actually looks like, whereas everybody is used to the style of learning with lectures followed by exams at regular intervals.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Can I ask some specific questions on matters that you did not deal with particularly? We have had some suggestions on the matter of grade promotion versus social promotion that we should be looking at the whole notion of grades, only in the elementary panel, very differently. For instance, North York was saying there should be social promotion right through to grade 9. Others are saying you should make your decisions about promotion or retention on a divisional basis after grade 3 or after grade 8, for instance, but not on a grade-by-grade basis, and that it is not so important at the secondary level because of the credit system.

I am wondering if you have looked at that matter. One of the questions around streaming—North York presented really interesting statistics yesterday—is that if you retain somebody, he has a much greater chance of going to a lower stream and becoming a dropout than he has if he is socially promoted and given the assistance within his class. I am wondering if OFS has given that any thought, in terms of some of the prestreaming streamings that take place, around that issue.

Ms. Potter: Of course, we would advocate anything that would help a child through the school system, anything that would give him the benefit of a better education. We certainly do not have anything about grade promotion or social promotion, but I am sure we would align ourselves with the latter.

Ms. MacNeil: If you are a bit behind the rest of your grade, I think more use could perhaps be made of summer opportunities and also more intensive work in the classroom for beefing up your skills. My understanding is that it is so devastating for most children to be retained—they get labelled as stupid—that it is very hard to do that without having permanent fallout for the

particular student. At the same time, we certainly disagree with what has happened in the last few years, where students are just promoted socially but not given any real assistance and their skill level becomes progressively lower and lower than that of the other children in their age groups.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Mr. Jackson was saying through his congestion there that summer school sometimes just adds to that whole notion of labelling.

Mr. Jackson: I will have a supplementary.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What about semesterizing? You do not talk much about that. We are starting to hear some interesting evidence on both sides of that issue.

Ms. MacNeil: We did not really look at that. Some of the students who are now in university and are now members of the federation have been through the semesterizing system. We do not have a particularly strong feeling about it one way or another.

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Mr. Villeneuve: Ms. MacNeil and Ms. Potter, thank you very much for something that is a little different. It is appreciated by the committee. You have talked about and suggested some pretty drastic changes. Are you speaking of flexibility to the point where there would be reduced or maybe no compulsory subjects?

Ms. Potter: Oh no, not at all. We are not saying you have to be back to basics and rigid as anything, but we have to have a core education. However, we are saying it is not necessarily a back-to-basics view that will work. It does not mean students will learn math just because there is more emphasis placed on that. There are more creative ways to attain a certain level of education in the students.

Ms. MacNeil: We are not proposing that you do away with core subjects. In fact, we are very concerned about the fact that students are allowed to drop sciences and maths fairly early in high school, because a lot of female students do that and then are permanently out of the running for a really broad spectrum of jobs. That is of concern to us. I think the school system has an obligation not to allow young students to do things that will cause them permanent problems.

I guess what we are proposing is a model of education where the student would be achieving certain skills, but through a very differentiated type of classroom practice and curriculum. If you were in the north, you would take advantage of the things that exist in the north in your classroom teaching, rather than teaching this sort of

everywhere-but-nowhere type of curriculum that students in Ontario now get, which means the curriculum does not really relate to anyone in the province. I do not know if that answers your question.

Mr. Villeneuve: That was my next question. You speak of texts that do not incorporate or include that. I think that can only come through experience; only the experience of the teacher at the head of the class could convey this. I do not really think you can put that down in a text. I want your observations on that, because I think you intimated here that it should be in a text.

Ms. Potter: It depends on what you think a text is. A text can simply be a handout; a textbook can be a four-page photocopied document that a teacher has prepared. There are other supplements to textbooks.

Mr. Villeneuve: You are advocating some imagination from the teaching profession that would cover the local spectrum of the students and the pros and cons of whatever situation they have.

Ms. Potter: Certainly not just the teachers themselves. I am not blaming this on teachers. There can be certain school boards, for example, that could take it upon themselves in certain areas to provide a certain set of documents. I am not saying teachers should run out and be photocopying their own little inserts and putting together what they feel is an adequate curriculum because it is just not adequately expressed in textbooks. I think we should all be taking this on as our job.

Ms. MacNeil: Yes, and also we do not think that, say, a student who is going to school in Toronto should remain ignorant of what life is like in the north and vice versa. I think it might be possible for the ministry to develop texts that would reflect different realities—regional, social and ethnic realities around the province—with teachers in certain regions maybe having the opportunity to use the resources available in their communities. When the students are learning math, if they are in Sudbury, they can do their calculations on tonnes of nickel going out of Sudbury rather than citrus fruit. It is important to take the students where they are at and where their families are at. I think the families will become more involved too in the learning process with the students, if you do that.

Mr. Villeneuve: That is an interesting suggestion. I have a final question. We have heard quite a bit about the a.m. student, the part-time student, the student who maybe gives more attention to a job that is earning him dollars as

opposed to his education. Your comments, please, on what that is doing to our educational system. I think it can be compatible to a degree. It certainly becomes competitive at a certain degree as to where the priorities are. Could you comment on that, please, as to your experiences? We have had some people who have said there should be no extracurricular activities such as jobs or whatever, and then other people say, "Well, a job is a learning process." What are your observations?

Ms. Potter: The problem is that once you start saying that people cannot have jobs, what about the family reality where they have to have jobs? You simply cannot tell people they cannot have jobs. It is unfortunate that some people have to.

However, I guess we could probably be creative about those things too. I do not know that we want to penalize people because of their economic reality. However, of course, if they are working Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights and not getting home until two in the morning because they are doing whatever for whatever amount of money, then it is going to have an impact on their education.

I do not know how we get around that problem. I do not know quite what to do about that.

Mr. Villeneuve: I certainly feel personally that being out in the cold, cruel world can be a learning experience at the age when students are going through secondary school. I think it is good to a degree. I do not know where you can draw the line.

Ms. MacNeil: I think there may be room for students certainly to have more contact with the workplace; that could be very beneficial. I think that, for students who are maintaining a good average in high school, certainly a little bit of part-time work is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, it might be a very beneficial thing.

I also would like to draw attention to the fact that many students are doing so to try to save money for university and college because of the inadequacy of the Ontario student assistance program system. They know they are not going to get a cent from OSAP, so we will get our digs in there.

I think in our first presentation to you in July, we mentioned the need for wraparound services and that you cannot just look at the education system in isolation. You have to look at incomes, employment, the Workers' Compensation Board and all of the other things that have an impact on families.

Certainly there are things that can be done through the Ministry of Community and Social Services, perhaps, to make sure that students do not feel so economically pressured to get out into the workforce. But certainly it is a problem. We know that students who do a lot of part-time work are more likely to wind up quitting.

Madam Chairman: We have Mrs. O'Neill and Mr. Jackson still on the list, so could you keep the questions a little bit to the brief side?

Mrs. O'Neill: I am going to begin with a couple of comments, if I may. Student government is part-time work, as far as I am concerned, as that is my memory. Though it is voluntary, I think it certainly is an excellent preparation for future endeavours. So I congratulate you for your efforts in that respect.

It is interesting to know that in the Olson report the word "excellence" appears often; that is the word that the deans of the faculties of education have just talked to us about. I think it is kind of neat that you have suggested that every student is capable of a level of excellence.

When we were in Sudbury, the things you have said about the north were said to us by a trustee in the north, maybe not as clearly or in such a lengthy fashion, but they certainly did bring it to our attention. I think the Ministry of Education in Nova Scotia has really tried to come to grips with what you are saying. I do not know how much contact you have with that province, but there is some interesting stuff going on there regarding teaching to the area to which—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Some of us used to have a lot of contact with that province.

Mrs. O'Neill: Yes, I tend to have a lot of contact with that province as well.

Anyway, to my question: I wondered if you had actually visited classrooms, as you have described, whether you have followed this study of Professor Olson and whether this experiment or whatever you want to call it is still progressing. Could you say a little bit more about it?

Ms. Potter: We are attempting to get in there just sort of to look around for a day, but, of course, you do not want to disrupt the way a classroom is working. They are now just beginning their school year. We do not want to go in and intrude at a time when they are just getting their system going. I think it is November, did you say?

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Ms. MacNeil: We have a trip planned to the school in October or November. We also want to take a look at some other schools. We understand

from the team of researchers which was there for a couple of years actually, I think, that the difference in the feel of the school is apparent when you step into the schoolyard. He said it is like night and day between that school and some other schools that he studied.

Mrs. O'Neill: At this point you have not visited the site?

Ms. MacNeil: No, we have not. In fact, the name of the school cited and the name of the teacher cited are changed to protect the confidentiality of the school, because one of the problems in studying the education system is that if you want to cite a name or cite a school, you have to go through the school board for permission. They are extremely reluctant to give permission for visits and observation.

Mrs. O'Neill: I just want to thank you for what I consider a very unselfish and forward-looking presentation.

Madam Chairman: A final question by Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Jackson: Shelley, my question would have to do with OSIS and semestering. I would like to try it from another angle. I would have hoped that you might have gotten your mind around a question which we are working on. I will start with some observations.

Ontario is the only province that still requires, on average, five years to complete your secondary school experience. I know we really do not officially have a grade 13 any longer, but that makes us unique among other provinces. In part of your confederation with coterminous student federations, that is a matter which they have had to deal with in terms of their four-year experience.

On semestering, the second observation is that we are finding that the largest single rationale for semestering, once it has begun within a school board jurisdiction, is that students depart a nonsemestered school to go to a semestered school. There is the competition factor, the protectionism of losing students. Schools are living and dying by enrolment these days, as you well know. That becomes the overriding rationale as to why they are going into a semestered situation.

A third observation, of course, would be that Ontario really does not have a great interface between our high school and post-secondary institutions in terms of entry. Again, that would indicate to me that somehow semestering is not being exploited sufficiently, because there is a breakdown. It means you can get out of school a

half a year earlier, as opposed to saying, "I can get into Brock, McMaster or Mohawk midstream."

Have you been giving some consideration to those three observations and their impact on students in this province? If so, are there some further comments you might be able to give us in those areas?

Ms. Potter: We have not looked at this at all. We can. At one of our conferences we could sort of talk to some of the student associations and see what this is meaning for them. I really have no comments to make on semestering. I do not know whether it is presenting difficulties, whether students are liking it, whether they are not liking it or whether it is that they are going to get to university or colleges sooner or not.

Mr. Jackson: We have had groups come forward to say that we should reduce the number of credits in order that it be a little easier to leave in four years and complete—I should not say leave—to complete it in four years and get the graduating diploma. That is something we as a committee have to deal with, as well as the fact that there is poor interface with the college of applied arts and technology system and the university system.

Certainly that creates both challenges and opportunities for students whom you represent in this province. But we would appreciate hearing from you on those issues at any time during the course of our activities, because we will be faced with writing recommendations well before Christmas.

We would hope that we would get some insight from the one student organization that has made a presentation to us. That was a point you made in your first presentation. You did not underscore it again today, but again I wish to put on the record that you are unique in terms of your representation of students in the province. Something that has that much of an impact on your membership we would like to hear from you. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: I would certainly like to echo Mr. Jackson's words. We do very much appreciate your participation. If at any time you do have additional information that you would like to send to our committee, we would more than welcome it. Thank you very much for your participation today.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I wonder if this room is being used by Canada Packers on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The temperature in this place is good only for hanging meat.

Madam Chairman: I would remind members that we do have a fairly busy afternoon and we also have a flight to catch to Thunder Bay. We will try to stay on time this afternoon and start

immediately at two o'clock. The select committee on education stands recessed till two o'clock this afternoon.

The committee recessed at 12:37 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 2:07 p.m. in committee room 1.

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to open up the afternoon session of the select committee on education. I notice I had a great success rate with asking the members to be here on time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Name names.

Madam Chairman: We have decided we will give Mr. Miclash and Mr. Johnston gold stars and the chair only a 20 per cent success rate in getting her members out on time.

I am pleased to welcome as our first presentation the Ontario Association for Community Living. Welcome to our committee. We have allocated a half-hour for your presentation time and we hope that there will be plenty of time at the end for members' questions. The members will drift in over the next few minutes, I am sure. We went late this morning, so I think a few of them are trying to catch up in their offices.

Please begin whenever you are ready and start by introducing yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR
COMMUNITY LIVING

Mr. Nicholls: I am pleased to introduce Margo Scott, who is chairperson of our education task force. She is past president of our association, has been around for 150 years and knows most everything about any volunteer I think we have.

Marg Pollard on my right is a staff person who has been associated with education and work and things like that in our organization for maybe only 100 years, not 150 years. Both ladies have been in this business for a long time both from a volunteer and a staff point of view.

Not for the record, as an aside, I would like you to know that my mother is very disappointed that we are not on TV.

Mr. Mahoney: So is mine.

Madam Chairman: All the members expressed identical wishes or desires, Mr. Nicholls, and all our pleadings were to no avail.

Mr. Mahoney: Generally it makes our meetings shorter, though.

Mr. Nicholls: It is nice to know that Sunday shopping is more important.

Madam Chairman: I am not sure it is more important, but it is certainly more controversial.

Mr. Nicholls: Really?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I had not noticed.

Madam Chairman: Please begin whenever you are ready.

Mr. Nicholls: The Ontario Association for Community Living, formerly known as the Ontario Association for the Mentally Retarded, as others have, thanks you for giving us the opportunity to share our views on grade promotions, semestering, streaming and OSIS. For those of you who may not know us too well, we would like to very briefly tell you who we are, and I mean briefly.

OACL is a federation of 120 local branch affiliates in the province. The majority of local associations deliver services to people with developmental handicaps, most of these funded through the Ministry of Community and Social Services, but all of our local associations, not just the majority, involve themselves in advocacy. One of the major roles of our provincial office is advocating on behalf of persons with developmental handicaps.

The goal of our association is that all persons live in a state of dignity, share in all elements of living in the community and have the opportunity to participate effectively. At one time our goal was that mentally retarded persons live in a state of dignity. We changed that not long ago because we felt that what we expect for people with developmental handicaps is the same as what we expect for everybody else, so we changed our goal.

You have a copy of our brief. Because of the time limitations, we do not intend to read it to you. Rather we will reflect on the points we have tried to present by presenting the topics of grade promotion, semestering and so on, in the context of the educational process for students with disabilities. One of the things we want to point out throughout all this, from our experience and the experiences we have had for a number of years, is the need for the Ministry of Education to work co-operatively with other ministries within government to provide services and supports for people with disabilities.

We have watched and listened to the TV channel, as I mentioned before, as other groups and individuals have shared their views and opinions with you. It will come as no surprise

that we support some of the views and disagree with others. Fortunately for us, it is your job to sort it all out and we wish you good luck.

It is our opinion that education cannot be viewed in isolation, as it is a preparation for life and all of the components of life. At one time we used to say that education was preparation for work, but we know now that is not true: It is a preparation for life. Therefore, education involves more than just reading, writing and arithmetic and those subjects we get ourselves involved with.

We also believe that besides the preparation for life, grade promotion, semestering, streaming and OSIS cannot be viewed in isolation from the whole educational process. Education is involved with all of life; grade promotion, semestering, streaming and OSIS must be put in a context.

The first three, some of us say, are methods we employ to reach objectives for individuals in that same context of a method by which we can use the term integration, and we will use the term integration in our presentation a few times today, because integration to us is very important.

On the other hand, OSIS is another matter. I retired from education in August 1987 and we looked on OSIS as a regulation that told us what we do and how we do it. There was no deviation from it in our minds. It may not be a regulation but we viewed it as such. It is a much broader document and covers a much broader area, we think, than the three areas I mentioned above.

In the context of cross-ministerial or interministerial co-operation, we get involved with many ministries of government, as you might imagine. In May 1987 the document *Challenges and Opportunities* was presented to us by the Minister of Community and Social Services (Mr. Sweeney). There are a number of things in that which I think stress what we are saying about interministerial co-operation and doing things for people and preparing them for life.

In the letter of introduction contained in the document, Premier David Peterson noted, "the government's commitment to fulfilling the promise of true community living for all residents of Ontario."

In the same document the Honourable John Sweeney noted this plan "is the beginning of a process which requires the full involvement of everyone who works with developmentally-handicapped people in Ontario. Through this co-operation, all Ontarians will have the opportunity to participate in the mainstream of society.... The Ontario government will do

everything in its power to support and promote the goal of community living."

We note that it does not say the Ministry of Community and Social Services will do these things; it says the Ontario government. *Challenges and Opportunities* stresses the importance of interministerial co-operation and the integration of persons with developmental handicaps into the community. Now in education, the passage of Bill 82 by the Ministry of Education is cited in this document as the most far-reaching step in attaining integration.

Page 7 of the document notes: "Bill 82 ensured that all exceptional school-age children in Ontario would have available, by 1985, special education services and programs appropriate to their individual needs"—and we stress individual—"without payment of fees by parents or guardians."

The government of Ontario recognized in passing Bill 82 that the development of a child with special needs is best promoted when treatment, support and educational programs are viewed as interdependent components and are planned together; thus, our stress on interministerial co-operation in planning for life for individuals, education being one of those components.

The statements we have quoted, which to us are government policy, support our contention that all persons with their unique and diverse needs have the right to share in all facets of the ongoing provision of education within the community from infancy to adulthood.

We further contend that the statements support our belief that full integration into the community, including the school system, are necessary to have these individuals participate in the mainstream of society, as indicated in the other document I quoted from.

As stated in our brief, our definition of integration into the community is a child's placement in a regular classroom in the neighbourhood school, full-time, with appropriate supports so that the individual can be a viable participant in classroom activities. Such integration promotes educational and social stimulation. To try to stress what we believe, we have helped parents initiate legal action against school boards to this end, the end of full integration—as an advocacy group, of course.

We believe these statements of government policy quoted earlier support a number of other beliefs that we have.

1. Supports for individuals must include specialized personnel, specialized materials and

equipment adapted, facilities modified and an individualized curriculum, which, as you can see, requires the co-operation of the Ministry of Health and probably the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

2. Adult educational opportunities must be available to all adult citizens, and some of our folks are not included in that at the present time. This involves the Ministry of Colleges and Universities as well as boards of education through the Ministry of Education.

3. Integration and needs-based programming for individuals must be an integral part of the process for true community living—and again, reflecting on streaming, the lack of streaming, the need for streaming or no need for streaming.

4. There must be a continuum of educational options provided to meet the needs of individuals to reach their potential.

5. Labels such as trainable retarded and hard-to-serve, as we see in legislation at the present time, in our view are inappropriate because, as Mr. Radwanski states—and by the way, in our brief we have spelled it incorrectly and we hope you will correct that for us—these labels result in a self-fulfilling prophecy. Students are streamed by labels in many school systems right now. Therefore, we oppose labels. However, we understand that legislation will soon be presented to remove labels from the acts and regulations. We hope that you will support that legislation when it comes before you.

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6. We believe that Radwanski was wrong in his recommendation 4: "That it be made an explicit and vigorously pursued goal of educational policy in Ontario to have all students"—and this is the part we take exception to—"except those precluded by severe mental or physical disability, continue in high school until graduation."

We know that all students can learn. In various parts of this province and other parts of Canada, it has been found by involving people with severe, severe disabilities in the mainstreams of life as much as possible—where there is integration—that all students can learn. The most severely handicapped people are the ones who have gained the most from the projects we have heard of across this country, so we believe it is wrong to make a blanket exclusion such as Radwanski has made without considering the needs and potential of each individual.

7. The section in OSIS entitled "Special Education Programs and Services" is a very important part of OSIS in our mind, and must be

implemented fully and consistently throughout the school system. It is our opinion, from information we get fed to us regularly, that that section is not being implemented fully and consistently throughout the school systems of this province.

8. Parents and guardians must be recognized as partners in the educational process and must be involved in planning and developing programs for individuals and in considering the options for children. This has great implications for the guidance programs in schools, as does our recommendation that guidance personnel must keep up to date on new and current information regarding post-secondary opportunities or the need for post-secondary opportunities for exceptional students.

9. A process needs to be developed for better liaison between elementary and secondary schools, particularly as it applies to the needs of exceptional pupils. We have found that in some elementary systems, supports are provided to exceptional students and when the youngster moves on to a program in a secondary school, for some reason or other these supports are dropped. We think a better liaison would probably prevent this from happening.

10. Careful consideration must be given to the accommodation of exceptional students. Lack of accessibility to various school resources can inhibit the opportunities of handicapped individuals. This could be a resource centre on a second floor when you have a lot of physically disabled or multiply handicapped people; as well as other services you can probably think of, labs and otherwise, away from the main traffic of the school, without an elevator, or some means other than somebody carrying somebody, that people with handicaps need to get to those places. This needs to be considered in determining where various services and resources are placed.

11. We also believe there has to be increased adaptability and flexibility in the utilization and articulation of such programs as continuing education, co-operative education, work experience, the linkage programs and community-related packages, in developing programs for all exceptional pupils. We feel that these programs are most important, particularly for handicapped people, because it is through some of these that individuals with handicaps can eventually take their place as contributing citizens in the community.

12. Promotion must be based on a continuous assessment of the student's successful completion of the work that has been developed for that

individual, based on his or her needs and strengths.

As I read the Radwanski report and read the section on the attainment of standard goals for all children, I was reminded that back in my public school days we had a boy of 16 in grade 3 and he never got out of grade 3. It would seem that there has to be some flexibility to prevent those things from happening when we talk about standards by grades or grade promotion.

13. School boards have to be more open and flexible to parents' requests and students' needs for summer programs to help children retain skills in progress. Many students with disabilities lose or regress in some of their skills during the summer break or in times of long hospitalization. Yes, there are programs in place in some jurisdictions to help these folks over long hospitalization, but not in all areas.

Operating schools on a year-round basis, which we see some boards are going to consider, would be advantageous to many handicapped youngsters. We should mention that we know there are many school boards in the province which offer summer school for disabled people as well as for the regular students, but again we say that there needs to be a little more consistency in considering the needs of all people. This could involve co-operation with other ministries, municipalities or community groups. It does not have to be totally education.

14. This reflects on something we mentioned before; that is, anything that can inhibit a person's ability to an appropriate educational opportunity must be eliminated, if possible. We have noted labelling, but streaming can also do this. It is imperative that all teachers have a positive belief that all their pupils can learn. This should be the starting point in developing an educational program.

15. This reflects on that. Teachers must be adequately trained in how to develop appropriate educational programs for exceptional students and how to work with parents and community agencies in doing so. We know that part of the teacher training program involves a special education course. We think there needs to be more than just an education course for people in teacher training.

16. This again reflects on the interministerial co-operation we talked about. Memorandum 81, which indicated co-operation among the ministries of Education, Health and Community and Social Services in providing supports for students, was an important step in the Bill 82 process, but what we have found in the feedback

we received is that there are still problems with local interpretation of memorandum 81.

Our association has worked with various ministries of government and school boards in developing resources, materials and guidelines to assist in integration and community living for persons with disabilities. For example, we ran a conference on education and employment and it resulted in this document, Bridges to Employment for Students with Disabilities, which was done by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education with some help from us as a result of the conference we held. In fact, in the back they give our association credit for helping with that.

As an example of interministerial co-operation again, and the fact that there are other community agencies, as well as ours, that are willing to assist government in bringing about opportunities for people to improve their quality of life, we also have a unit going around on peer tutoring which is a buddy system within school systems. We have piloted that. It is in many parts of the province. We think that is another way we have been able to help the educational process for handicapped people. There are other agencies doing the same.

The Ontario Association for Community Living has regularly and consistently played an extremely active role in promoting change in the various aspects of the educational process. Sometimes it is actively working with people. Sometimes it is just jabbing a little bit, as some of you know. We will continue to work in co-operation to assist school boards, parents, teachers, ministries and community agencies to see that all students have the programs that best suit their needs in integrated settings so that in the long run, as I quoted earlier, all Ontarians will have the opportunity to participate in the mainstream of society, as stated by the government of Ontario in this document I referred to earlier.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present. We are open for questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Nicholls. You have certainly given us an extensive list of recommendations to work from. Two people have indicated they have questions, Mr. Johnston and Mr. Adams.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I have just a couple of comments first, if I might, and then just one question. I was very pleased about the fact that you emphasized in your written presentation the notion of a buddy system or peer tutoring as an approach, which we have been hearing a little about but which I find a very interesting

counterbalance to the notion of the need to keep the bright kid in a separate class, that there is a better way of incorporating the bright kid as a tutor in a heterogeneous class. I was pleased to see that.

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I was also very pleased—by the way, Mr. Cooke and I were just chatting about it—about your reference to the importance of continuing education. Mr. Cooke has been raising the issue that when we look at these issues of OSIS and semestering, etc., we really do need to be looking at the role of continuing ed as well. With your particular client group that you represent, you make the point very graphically, but it applies to the general population as well.

My question is around semestering, about which we have heard a great deal. You talk about the possibility of year-round schooling and the semestering working that way, although in most circumstances it does not; it is a two-semester system which still has the summer break. The point was made by one group the other day that for kids who are absent a fair amount, whether it is for health reasons or because of disability or for reasons of truancy because they are really not that enamoured of the system, the semestering system causes some problems in the sense that it is a shortened period and they can lose too big a gap. On the other hand, the possibility of quicker re-entry is there.

I was wondering if you would make any comments about how you saw that balance for a number of students you might represent who might have some multiple disabilities, which means they are in and out of hospital from time to time.

Mrs. Pollard: I think once before when I was before this committee I talked on this point too. I find there are a lot of children our associations are helping to get into the mainstream of life who are in hospital for six, seven or eight weeks. They have to be away. I do not think we have so much in the truancy line, but I do think we have a lot of regular visits to hospitals for fairly extensive stays.

There are some who have worked with parks and recreation, or municipalities or some form of Ministry of Community and Social Services recreation area that were able to give a program of about six weeks during the summer. Where they have taken place, they have been very successful for the youngster in retention of the skills he has already learned and for his ability to go on to the next step, so to speak, and often in

preparation of some of the things he would need for his next class.

Bill Nicholls referred to going from elementary to secondary, and I think that is a phase that needs a lot of reinforcing and often learning some new skills, because 99 per cent of the time you are going to a new school, a new area, and you need to learn new bus routes. Those skills, as well as the courses, could sometimes be learned during that summer break. I do not know if that is giving you the kind of information you want.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: In part, but the other question is whether or not you see the advantages to the semester system for that in and out outweighing the negative side, which is that you can lose a semester totally whereas you might not lose a year in the old organizational structure.

Mrs. Pollard: I would have to say that if you asked for a vote of both the pupils and the parents, they would say the positives outweigh the negatives as far as that goes. The need for continuity is much more necessary than for the average pupil.

Mr. Nicholls: Also, from a straight personal point of view, having worked with a lot of handicapped people over the years, the advantage of semestering is that there are short-term goals that they can attain in a short period of time rather than looking over a whole year to complete something.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is a good point. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: A brief supplementary from Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Jackson: Just to build on Mr. Johnston's question, which was also the point that you raise on operating the school year on a year-round basis and its implications for semestering, I appreciated the fact that you highlighted that, but that represents an additional challenge. I know the importance to a member of your association of continuity throughout the summer and we would achieve that, but how does that fit with a semestered and a nonsemestered? For your group specifically, you would really be wanting to attempt year-round education in some instances.

Mr. Nicholls: Yes.

Mrs. Pollard: I think there are lots of regular pupils who want to continue in the school. Maybe if they did not have that long break in between, they would not become the dropouts.

Mr. Jackson: I am in agreement with you. I have a reputation here for being a little more traditional than those on the semester band-

wagon, but you bring to the table a unique perspective which Mr. Johnston has pursued in more depth.

I also want to bring into the equation your point on page 5. I think a lot of people do not appreciate that as a function of Bill 82, you lost the continuity of a year-round program. You have lost those three months you had in previous settings. Your challenge to this committee, to look at a year-round, continuing-basis structure would help us return to the benefits, one of the few benefits that were arrived at in those provincial schools. I did not want that point to escape a highlight, because it is a significant advocacy point for those of us who have been involved with community living.

Mrs. Pollard: Yes.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Adams.

Mr. Adams: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Bill, how are you?

Mr. Nicholls: Hi, Peter. I did not see you.

Mr. Adams: I am sorry I was late. My colleagues will tell you I am normally 10 minutes early. It is just a coincidence today.

Mr. Nicholls: You knew I was coming.

Mr. Adams: I knew. I know about the employment in education documents and the peer tutoring unit. The committee hears all sorts of people here, and it is quite clear that in the various areas of education there is a good deal of unevenness across the province. Some boards, for example, or some groups are very good at some things and less good at others. I wonder if you could direct us to instances, perhaps boards, where the students you represent are being particularly well catered to, which could perhaps be used as examples for anything the committee might look at.

Mr. Nicholls: Marg has the provincial perspective which—you see, I would say Peterborough, but—

Mr. Adams: I realize that. This is not a white wash for any particular bill.

Mrs. Pollard: No.

Mr. Adams: Do you understand?

Mrs. Pollard: Yes, and that is what I am going to say, because sometimes you will hear some particular separate school boards always repeated and held up as examples, and I think there are some boards that have, as a general philosophy—I wish all boards would get a statement on integration, on what their philoso-

phy of education is for all students, whether they have handicaps or special ed or not.

I think some boards have wrestled with that very successfully. There is still a lot of work to be done on boards in general, and probably some direction from the the ministry is needed on that.

Rather than whole boards doing successful things, I think we have many good examples of where the co-op education program is working very successfully, where they have good, co-operative continuing education programs, where there are some work skills programs that are out of the ordinary, and not just activities of daily living but the next useful component to the work skills.

There are programs that have exceptional resources available to them, so rather than reel off boards, I would rather talk about the spots than the kinds, and as I say, the continuing ed, the co-op ed and those kinds of programs are coming along. We have a lot of hope for the future, particularly in our redesigning of the peer tutoring video that we hope to have, or whatever our form is, which we hope will encourage all the other boards to get into that kind of programming.

I think there are many boards that are working successfully to widen the admission rates for the co-op ed programs. Most of the time, they have been for those with a little trouble, a little behaviour problem or a little learning difficulty, and now they are opening the admissions to more severely—in the special-ed area. That is one area I see a lot of hope for.

Mr. Nicholls: Marg could provide you with that information, if you would like.

Mrs. Pollard: If you wish names, I can give them.

Mr. Adams: I was about to say that. That is useful, as you put it, and I understand why you are very wary of actually putting names and so on, but if you do have examples.

Mrs. Pollard: We do have some examples of all of those different programs, yes. Some have been going on for a long time. It is not as if they were just discovered.

Mr. Adams: I am aware of some. Thank you very much.

Mr. Nicholls: That is our time.

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Madam Chairman: That is your time. Thank you very much to the Ontario Association for Community Living for sharing your thoughts with us today.

Our next presentation will be by Dr. Peter Moon and Dr. Robert Lance. Would you come forward, please. Good afternoon and welcome to our committee. We are very pleased to have you before us today. We have allocated one half-hour for your presentation time. We are hoping that perhaps half of that could be for your oral presentation and the remaining half reserved for questions from the members. You may begin whenever you wish. Please start by introducing yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

PETER MOON
ROBERT L. LANCE

Dr. Moon: My colleague is Dr. Robert L. Lance and I am Peter Moon. We will split this up into thirds, one third for us to elaborate on the submission and two thirds for the committee members to ask questions, if they wish.

Thank you for the opportunity, especially as I understand that all of you have been closely associated with education, either as parents, trustees or teachers. We are going to confine our remarks today to two matters. One is the early identification of learning disabilities and the other is readiness for learning.

I want to start by saying that certain things have to function properly for learning to take place—physical abilities, vision, hearing, listening skills and gross and fine motor skills, for example—and if these things are not in order, then children will not be able to learn properly. Their deficiencies have to be corrected before they can make any progress. It has been observed many times that children who are more advanced in physical development invariably perform better than do children who are not.

I am going to give you an example here of how vision training works. It is an example taken from the last war. At that time, the air force selected for flying training only men with perfect vision. But that was not enough to prepare them for action. To get them up to standard, they designed training to increase the perceptual skills of pilots in aircraft recognition, so that when it came time they would not be firing at the wrong targets.

This is how it worked. The instructor would flash digits on the screen at one fiftieth of a second, three for a start and then eventually seven. Now, with a fiftieth of a second, you do not have time to read across the line of figures. All you can do is get a fast impression and write it down. Then the instructor would describe the characteristics of the 150 different aircraft in the curriculum and point out the distinguishing

features. After this, they would flash pictures of aircraft or parts of an aircraft on the screen at one fiftieth. In the final examination, we had a whole second to look at these pictures. When you have been trained at a fiftieth of a second, it seems like for ever, and nobody failed that test.

This is what readiness is all about. We have to improve the basic skills and prepare the person or the child for the job to be done. In the case I described, it was sharpening up perceptual skills and increasing the state of information processing. The same thing applies to children starting school. We have to get them ready to learn. We should never assume they are ready for it and we should never assume they are all at the same stage of readiness.

The reason I asked Dr. Lance to join me today is because he has far more experience than I have in the identification of learning problems. He has been in the field for a long time, as a teacher, research worker and practitioner. Years ago, he and his co-workers established the fact that physiological, not psychological factors are at the root of most learning impairments. They also showed that potential learning problems can be detected with high accuracy at an early age, even before a child enters school. They have the evidence to substantiate these beliefs.

These views at one time were antithetical to what most professionals believed, and there is a lot of confusion as to what early identification is really all about. Our definition means that children with potential learning problems are identified before they get into difficulty, not when they are already in difficulty with learning. This means it should be done as soon as a child enters school.

If it is done in good time, we have a fighting chance of ironing out the differences among children created by cultural factors, family background and other kinds of influences. The schools, after all, can do nothing about the home and they can do nothing about the colour of the child's skin or the attitude of the parents; but they can do something about readiness training and they can prepare children for learning. This is the school's responsibility.

I might add that it is not only children from disadvantaged backgrounds who have trouble with learning. You find many children from privileged backgrounds with the same problems, including some who might be described as gifted.

Ideally, early identification leads to preventive practices in the classroom. If the identification of a problem is deferred until the child is seven

years old, then it should be called late identification, because that is what it is. If that identification is delayed, it can result in failure for the child, failure in school and eventual lack of success in the workforce.

For a long time, the popular belief has been that the brain is the only organ involved in learning, which is a fallacy. The whole body has to be involved for efficient learning to take place. This ancient brain belief accounts for the traditional reliance on tests of intelligence to explain the inability of children to learn. The only thing an intelligence test does is to tell us what we already know, that a child is not learning. A test score reveals little if anything about a child's intelligence.

After all is said and done, that kind of test is nothing more than an achievement test, so if the child has not learned very much, the test score is depressed but reveals nothing of the child's capacity for learning. The whole body has to be trained for learning. Think for a moment how difficult it would be to read a book if we could not move our eyes. You might hold up a piece of paper.

Dr. Lance: Take something you have in front of you to read, begin reading it, stop your eyes and then continue reading. See what happens if your eyes do not move. Start to read it first, so you get into the spirit of reading it, and then stop your eyes and continue to try to read what is on that page.

Mr. Jackson: Can I move my head?

Dr. Lance: No.

Mr. Adams: I could show you how, Mr. Jackson, if you like.

Dr. Lance: You can do whatever, but you will end up seeing what happens. Many children, and this is a central part of my own particular private practice, have fairly moderate to severe functional vision problems where their eyes do not necessarily stand still but wobble and do all kinds of things.

Dr. Moon: Efficient eye movement, as Dr. Lance says, is vitally important in learning to read; yet we come across lots and lots of children, and adults too, whose eye movements are jerky and erratic, and that impediment alone prevents them either from learning to read or from reading efficiently.

As you all know, the effects of learning problems are widespread. Not only are the school dropouts a matter of serious concern, but so are the burgeoning classes in special education and the losses in productivity and quality caused by

people who find it difficult to learn a job and to perform effectively in the workforce.

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Here in Ontario we have good schools and competent teachers. Teachers can be taught effective methods of learning-problem identification. They can learn to do the kind of assessment that we refer to in the written submission, but they need special training. They also need training to deliver remedial programs. The same methods used on children can be used with older students in difficulty.

I think we illustrated that in our section on what we called late failures and how such people can be helped even late in life to overcome their learning difficulties. But as I said before, the identification of potential learning problems must be done during the first few weeks of a child's career, and it should be done by teachers because they are the logical people to do it.

After observing a class of children for about a month, a trained teacher can carry out the first stage of learning-problem identification in about 10 minutes. That is only the starting point because after this we have to address the deficiencies. This is where the curriculum comes in. But any curriculum must be developmentally correct for the child.

During an early session of this committee, Mr. Keyes drew attention to the school failures who end up in the correctional system. His observations have been validated in many other jurisdictions because study after study shows that among juvenile offenders, there are between 50 and 75 per cent with learning problems which were never attended to.

Most of them have experienced nothing but failure in school. For many of them the only alternative was to drop out. A little while ago we went to a provincial correctional institute. During the visit the superintendent told us that some of the youngsters would even refuse to take part in the simplest testing program because all they expected was another failure experience.

I might add that when motivation has been destroyed, it is extremely difficult to do anything about it. Over the years we have spoken to people in education, including government and school boards, to explain our rationale for early identification. The reactions have ranged from mild interest or disinterest to downright hostility.

The reason is perhaps that the rationale is so simple that people find it hard to believe. Teachers, however, understand because they are the people who have to deal with the problems in the early grades. They spend a great deal of their

time doing the sort of things they would not have to do if readiness training were thoroughly done, because if it were thoroughly done then teachers would be doing what they are trained to do; they would be teaching. The public expects teachers to cure all the problems being thrust on the schools these days, but the schools are not really given the tools to do it, in some respects.

According to the editorial in the *Toronto Star* on September 6, Premier Peterson promised to halve the dropout rate. That is an ambitious target, but it may not be altogether unrealistic. It might take longer than five years but it will not be achieved unless we adopt different approaches.

Education, just like business, is far too tolerant of fads. Things are accepted without evaluation. Across-the-board programs are instituted without first determining what the real problems are. The solutions all seem to come before the identification of the problems.

Take the reading problem, for example. If somebody cannot read properly, the answer is special education. In some cases this means giving the person more of the kind of thing that did not work in the first place—in bigger doses. A reading problem is sometimes interpreted as being a psychological problem, a block of some kind or the result of poor instruction. There might be a hint of truth in any one of these, but as my colleague here has said many times, "If he cannot read after all these things have been done, then he does not have a reading problem. It has to be something else." Inability to read is the symptom; it is not the problem.

Rarely do we ever come across a reference to the effects of learning problems on reading performance. We believe the connection should be self-evident. Also, there has to be an emphasis on readiness to learn. Everything needs to be done to remove those barriers in the way of children's progress. We cannot afford to let them develop into hard-core cases or dropouts, and with the right programs, we believe it is possible to make improvements in as little as two or three months.

On September 9, Mr. Mulroney announced his war on illiteracy and he promised support for the groups who are working on the problem. That is praiseworthy, but there is something missing. That something was identified by Peter Calamai, the Southam News correspondent in Washington. Mr. Calamai commended the prime minister's action but said he wished the funds would be used starting in grade 1. That is the obvious place to begin, and that is where the payoff could be the greatest.

Madam Chairman: We will now open up for questions from the members.

Mr. Adams: Gentlemen, I followed what you said and I have read the material. I wonder if I can discuss it with you in the light of the nursing example. The first thing I would say is that I suppose you would agree with me that this one case of decreasing projected failures from 27 to 20 could easily be a coincidence.

Dr. Lance: There was a 10-year baseline study on those nurses and there was a direct left corner. The next year, it went back to the same baseline. Obviously your answer is right; it could have been a separate event.

Mr. Adams: The other side of it is, let's assume that this change from the projected 27 to 20 was the result of learning to learn. I wonder if that is desirable, because if, for example, the failure rate had been reduced to zero, it would have looked even better. Was it desirable in that case for all 27 of those students, simply because they learned how to learn, to pass that particular examination?

Dr. Lance: The other dimensions of themselves as students I think are interesting. Their grade point average increased as a result of it, so that their grades went up about one letter grade by the end of 10 weeks. In their information, and they would report it and teachers reported it, they seemed to be more able to let their information flow; their memories seemed to be better, their study times reduced, they were more efficient learners, they were less stressful as learners and they would express that.

What essentially it is saying is that here is a way, and a specific demonstration with adults—because very few people feel that we can do much about adult's learning styles, that it is fixed somehow. We showed with adults who were not particularly high-risk students but were an inner-city, open-admission, multicoloured, multi-racial nursing program, of older students besides, that we could change learning styles and some personal styles with direct intervention.

I think if the project had started at the first of the year and had continued through their whole two years, we would see an entirely different kind of person come out of it.

Mr. Adams: The example I had in my mind was the other way. In teacher training programs at the moment in the province, it seems to me that because of the extraordinarily high academic standards for entry, you actually have a group of students who are extremely able in terms of being able to learn.

Dr. Lance: That is not true.

Mr. Adams: Okay. They are very good at getting through the system and, as a result, they have almost a 100 per cent success rate. If in fact the teacher ed programs at the moment are taking, by many measures, these very talented students and are having a nearly 100 per cent success rate, I wonder if that is desirable, because they are students who can learn. It is very difficult to fail them, because they look at the system and they say, "This is what we have to do." It does not follow in the end that they are really well-qualified teachers. That is why I am saying, if there are—

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Dr. Lance: But I think there are other attributes, sir. There are other attributes besides learning subject-matter content to be given back on an examination. I think if you have ever been to school, there ought to be a coined phrase related to sociopath, like an eduopath: "I'm an eduopath. You put me in school anywhere and I do well on all kinds of exams. Give me another language to learn and I'll do that."

Mr. Adams: But your learning to learn means something different than that, does it?

Dr. Lance: Yes. We are talking especially in young children, in people who are less than efficient learners, ordinary normal folks who, given adequate developmental readiness opportunities, could become like these others that we may have a few of.

Mr. Mahoney: A very quick question. You stated that the identification of a problem should occur as early as possible, and I quite agree with that, but I would be at some difference with you in that it should be done immediately by the teacher and can be done in 10 minutes. Having been through the identification and placement review committee and the whole process of identifying—

Dr. Lance: We have a screening system and it progresses through the first half of the kindergarten year. By the end of the first month—there is a workshop that starts in the beginning of this—the teachers are asked to do a particular task. It takes about 10 minutes per child to make the judgements necessary at a screening level, not at an evaluation level. That screening level identifies those who already, in the teacher's opinion and on certain criteria, are showing high-risk signs. Those children who are at crisis at that point are dealt with at other than a teacher level.

At the end of the next eight-week period, there is another thing that goes on and those children

who have shown themselves by 16 weeks into school do a certain thing. Then there is another eight-week period that happens. So, essentially by the middle of the kindergarten year, those children who were showing high-risk signs, those who were showing them immediately versus a little later and a little later, are picked out and identified, and then another process goes on. This is only screening at this level, not evaluation.

Dr. Moon: The first stage of the process—

Mr. Mahoney: So, if in fact a child is identified as having a problem in one area, it would either be expanded upon or corrected at a later stage?

Dr. Lance: Good.

Mr. Mahoney: And the fact that the kid may not have had breakfast that morning might be affecting the outcome of that 10-minute test?

Dr. Lance: Well, you see it is not specifically a test. It has to do with teacher observation.

Mr. Mahoney: Evaluation, I understand that.

Dr. Lance: A series of items that they observed, examples of what is happening to the child in that classroom that ultimately could be a test. As a psychologist, I could test them. I can teach teachers to observe for some of the same dimensions in the context of school.

Mr. Mahoney: Okay; that clarifies that. I wonder if your statement is not too simplistic, though, when you say that if all the remedial attempts—you use the reading problem—if all the remediation takes place and the child still cannot learn, you assume that the child does not have a reading problem but some kind of other problem. Perhaps the attempts to get the child reading have either not got through for some reason, such as a problem in the delivery, or the extent of that reading problem had just not been thoroughly analysed.

Dr. Lance: My experience is—and I am somewhat reiterating what we have already said—that if a child goes to school, is studied, is put in a special class or has a tutor, has been in school for a number of years and is not reading adequately, and especially if he is struggling with reading, we need to pay attention to something else.

The reason I make this statement when I have an opportunity to talk about it is because I see children in my clinical practice who for 10 or 12 years have been in remedial reading and somewhere back three, four, five, six years ago, they were written off as if they would never do any better than they are doing now. In my experi-

ence, that is not true, but the schools at that point were not equipped to look at the whole problem and were quick to look at the reading problem and the curriculum aspect of reading, which is not a solution to that kind of a problem.

Mr. Mahoney: Could you just very briefly give me an example of what looking at something else would entail?

Dr. Lance: This is kind of like a quick developmental lesson. I do this with all the moms I work with. I say, "If you are right-handed, you should be right-eared, right-eyed, right-handed and right-legged." Now there is a whole foundation behind that.

The computer here is a pulsating device that through your dominant eye it processes faster than your nondominant eye. I am not making this up. There is good, solid, substantial literature that supports this. The eyes go across the page, look, check, look, check, look, check. Without the check step, the visual memory is lost for what the person is seeing. People who look, look, look, look have no visual memory for the previous part; so it is like going in one eye and out the other.

They will say the words and they will know the words. They will have to work very hard at reading and they cannot quite hang on to it. When we go to work to correct right hand, right ear, right eye and right leg—those dominance patterns intact—and smooth oculomotor movements—horizontal, vertical, diagonal and rotary and changing the focal length—without teaching reading, just teaching that—and it is all physical and done by activity—the person will jump anywhere from—and I am thinking of a middle elementary school kid—two to five years' tested reading. It is like the computer gets lined up. I explain it in a sense as a tuneup. If you have a car that is not running smoothly and you think something is wrong with it, you take it to the shop. You say to them, "Fix it." They check it out and say, "There is nothing wrong with it. It just needed a tuneup."

Too many of the children I am seeing need a tuneup. There is nothing wrong with them, even some children who have been labelled disabled already. It is that their timing mechanism in their perceptual motor system is out of phase. Their eyes, ears and body dimensions related to learning are not in time.

Mr. Jackson: All you do is put more gas into the car, hoping it will work better.

Dr. Lance: If you take a person like that who is not reading well and give him more reading and then more reading and then more reading

without getting behind it, I say that at that point reading becomes a symptom of the problem. It would be like trying to treat syphilis by addressing the chancre. We get rid of the chancre, but the person dies somewhere down the road.

Mr. Mahoney: That would explain why some people around here are right-handed and left-winged? No, I will take that back.

Dr. Lance: It could be.

Madam Chairman: I take those comments personally, Mr. Mahoney.

Dr. Lance: Left-handers have a particularly hard time in English. English is a right-handed language. It goes left to right, top to bottom, counterclockwise. Longhand cursive writing has some 50 moves counterclockwise. Again, if English had been invented by a left-hander, it would have gone the other way.

Hebrew is a left-handed language. Chinese is a language that goes from the bottom to the top. In a country like yours with so many diversities, you are going to have some people handicapped in Chinese who are not handicapped in English. I had a young man who was an A student in a Hebrew academy and was a severely learning-disabled kid in English. When we worked on the problem, he was as bright in English as he was in Hebrew. He was a genius in his Hebrew studies. We were able to get across that barrier. Hebrew is left-handed and English is right-handed. He was truly a learning-disabled person in English but not in Hebrew.

Madam Chairman: I had not actually heard that explanation before. Now I have an excuse when I am talking to both my husband and my son for why there is a failure of communication. It is because they are on the left-handed system and I am on a right-handed one.

Mr. D. S. Cooke: You used to be on the left.

Mr. Mahoney: We all did when we were younger.

Madam Chairman: We are almost out of time. In fact, I think we have 30 seconds left. Mr. Johnston, would you like to make the best use of that?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Some of us get more radical as we get older. The trouble with these tuneups is that every time they do a tuneup on my 1973 Buick, it runs worse than it did before they did the tuneup, but that is another matter. I do love the metaphors.

I gather that our system is not using your system of early identification. Who is or is anybody? That is one question. Does our early

identification system which we have in place to one degree or another across the province relate in any way to your system?

Dr. Moon: I might comment very briefly here that we are using it in segments of industry. It works with adults just as it does with children. It helps to identify the reason certain people cannot do certain jobs that require, for example, heavy visual demands and things like that. Bob, you better answer briefly.

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Dr. Lance: The early identification program I helped originate and work with has been used in a variety of places—in Florida, West Virginia and some in Ohio. It is one of those things that comes and goes. The program is primarily preventive, and there is a trap in preventive programs. It is a simple trap. You will be talking to a school principal describing a system and he says: "Oh, it's wonderful, but please don't identify any more problems. I have enough problems. If I could only solve the ones I have. Now you are going to identify the potential problems and triple my work."

True early identification is somewhat futuristic. We have the system intact. We have researched it well. We have probably worked with several hundred thousand kids throughout the United States. I did a project in Windsor with St. Clair College of Applied Arts and Technology a number of years ago. When early ID was mandated, I think the Windsor system took some pieces from our program and included it in what it was doing.

I am from Akron. Akron had a program for 15 years. The woman who was the prime mover of it became the deputy mayor. She became political on the basis of her success in the program because it was a parent-oriented program that would recruit 600 to 800 parents per school throughout the city; she had 21 schools, so she had a heavy constituency. She ran for deputy mayor and won. Now she has her own consulting firm. When they hired someone to come in behind her, the person came from California and brought his own program. They were not even concerned about keeping this particular form because they had to learn a new program. The answer to the question is that it is intact and functioning in Akron through a kind of clinical practice and in some locations in Ohio and Florida and a little piece of it in Windsor.

It is somewhat futuristic to think of prevention, predicting potential learning-disabled kids. Early identification as it has transpired here in Ontario has not matured and has not come to an

early identification system. It is earlier identification maybe of emotionally disturbed children and earlier identification of LD kids. We are talking about identifying on the basis of soft signs those kids who are potential learning problems before labelling and working with them to head them off from going into crisis. It can be done through a basal approach in kindergarten and first grade. It does not have to pull them out into special ed and all of that.

Mr. Jackson: I wish you could stay longer.

Dr. Moon: Thank you, Mr. Jackson. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Dr. Moon. We appreciate the time you took to give us your presentation. You have certainly given us a different perspective to it. Thank you.

Our next presentation will be by the Ontario Catholic Secondary School Principals' Association. Mr. Rooney, could you bring your group forward, please?

ONTARIO CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION

Mr. Rooney: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I am sure for you legislators, if you were a baseball team, it would be as if the dog days of August are long past. I am sure this September may feel like the dog days of this committee in the light of travelling all over the province, in the light of the number of briefs and presenters you have heard.

This afternoon, as president of Ontario Catholic Secondary School Principals' Association, I am grateful to be here. I will ask our own members to introduce themselves. As practical practitioners, we represent almost 100 years of serving secondary kids in this province.

Sister Corrigan: My name is Sister Lucille Corrigan. I am a member of the congregation of Notre Dame, I have been in secondary school education for the past 32 years, not counting my own experience in high school. I had the privilege of administering Notre Dame High School in east Toronto for 18 years, a school which, I would point out for our purposes, is a mixture of basic, special education, general and advanced levels. I had the privilege there of seeing the end of the Robarts plan, the beginning of the credit system, OSIS and the switch from HS1.

For these past three years, I have been honoured to be asked to open St. Patrick Secondary School, which is a neighbour of yours down on the edge of Chinatown. I had always been in right-handed schools until then, and I

think I discovered the questions I should be asking from the gentleman who spoke before us.

Mr. DiRocco: I am Dan DiRocco. Presently I am principal of St. Elizabeth Catholic High School in Thornhill, the region of York, and I am the treasurer of our association. I am in my 22nd year of secondary school education. I have taught at public secondary schools, the Catholic private schools and the Catholic publicly funded secondary schools. I have been in schools that have been all-male, schools that have been co-ed, schools that have had technological programs, schools that have had strong business and science programs, as well as those which have been primarily academic-oriented.

These have varied across the province from Stoney Creek to Mississauga, to Willowdale, to York region now. I have also served in the capacity of an elected official of a board, as a trustee for two terms, some time back. Before that, I had been a vice-principal and a department head, as well as a classroom teacher.

Mr. Ware: My name is John Ware. I am chairman of the OCSSPA educational and social concerns committee. I have been a Catholic high school teacher for 28 years. I started teaching in 1961 at Michael Power/St. Joseph, and in 1974 I moved to Cardinal Newman in Scarborough as a vice-principal; I was there for four years as a vice-principal and four years as principal. I had a sabbatical year in 1983-84 and then I was given the job to start a new Catholic high school in North Etobicoke called Monsignor Percy Johnson in 1983. This year I was moved to Chaminade College, which is a boys' high school in Weston. I spent the intervening 14 to 15 years in co-educational composite schools. I went to De La Salle College, a boys' school, and I am back in a boys' school 30-something years later. I am pleased to be here.

Mr. Rooney: I am Jim Rooney and proud to be from St. Michael's College in Toronto. I moved out of Toronto and taught in Orangeville and other great dynamic places like Guelph. I am proud to be a resident now of the royal city. For 22 years, I have been in secondary education in a variety of structures, from junior high through to senior high, most recently moving to one of the oldest high schools in this province, that is, Bishop MacDonnell, which two weeks ago commenced its 132nd graduation class. With that background, let us begin our brief.

The Ontario Catholic Secondary School Principals' Association is grateful and pleased to have again this opportunity to make a presentation to you. We intend certainly to make our

comments brief with respect to the four areas: OSIS, differentiated programming, semestering and grade promotion.

The impact within the secondary panel at this time with regard to OSIS is certainly difficult to assess. The first students have only started to graduate from secondary schools and, therefore, it is too early to assess accurately the impact of this initiative. We see much that is good in OSIS and its new initiatives. We have concerns for the adequacy of the basic-level and general-level programs. The increase in the number of credits and the number of compulsory credits has put a particular burden on students taking the majority of their courses at the basic or general level. We all know that almost 70 per cent of our students do not go to post-secondary education. Therefore, it is vital that we look at the program needs and the appropriate in-service training, upgrading of our teachers to meet their needs. I, therefore, make the following recommendations:

That the ministry provide for in-service training for our teachers to help them in the development of curriculum, including the acquisition of material resources appropriate for each level of instruction;

That consideration be given to reduction of the required number of credits for the Ontario secondary school diploma to a maximum of 28 and that partial credits be based on fractions of a current credit.

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With regard to differentiated programming, as an association we have major concerns about the disadvantaged. We believe every student must have the possibility of achieving an A within a program designed for her or his needs. This precludes the disappearance of realistic recognition of differences reflected in programming.

Therefore, we recommend that programming continue to be differentiated to challenge but always with the possibility of success for students at every level of ability; that nonpromoted students continue to be transferred to high school; that increased resources be directed to the elementary panel to enhance the current remediation program and early detection of learning problems; and that a more flexible use of partial credits be encouraged to accommodate the needs of high-risk students.

On the semester system, most of us employ it in Ontario in one form or another. There is little doubt that it is compatible with the flexibility demanded by the present OSIS guideline. However, we feel that option is an important value in this matter and, therefore, we recommend that

semester or nonsemester determinations for a structure be made at the local level in order to meet the needs of that local community.

With regard to grade promotion, the implementation of the credit system in the early 1970s eliminated the grade promotion process in secondary schools, and subject promotion has done much to encourage students to stay in school and to create flexibility in the system. As an association, we support the current practice of this province that subject promotion be retained.

We realize our brief is brief. We realize also, as practical and daily practitioners, the value of an opportunity to dialogue with you, and it is appreciated. We realize as an association the importance to teachers and students with whom we have the privilege of working each day, because we are integral partners in that process. Change will occur. The change in demands for future needs within an adolescent workforce is a critical concern. The potential labour shortage that we face, that the province faces, and obviously the potential labour shortage in teachers and administrators for those schools are of concern.

We look forward to being active in this process in a very positive and professional manner and we await with you your recommendations. However, let us dialogue today and explore some of your questions as we share with you our experiences and our convictions about students, parents and teachers.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Rooney. As chairman, I particularly appreciate the fact that your brief was brief. It was short and to the point, very succinct.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Attention span problem.

Madam Chairman: That too.

Mr. Mahoney: Is that what you call getting even?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is only the beginning.

Madam Chairman: Just before we go to Mr. Johnston on the attack, I had a question of my own which, as chairman, I am not allowed to put to you, so I will make it more like a comment. You have made a recommendation concerning teacher in-service training, and we have heard that from a number of different sources as we have conducted our hearings. I think back to several years ago when there was another gentleman who made that type of recommendation, perhaps in a different format. He said there should be mandatory teacher retraining and upgrading. I think he got a fair amount of

disagreement on that principle from various associations, including some of the teachers' federations, because of its mandatory nature. I believe the gentleman's name, if we all recall, was Larry Grossman.

Mr. Adams: Never heard of it.

Mr. Jackson: Larry who?

Madam Chairman: I am not sure Mr. Jackson remembers that name. If we now go back to Mr. Rooney's recommendation in the report, I would like you to comment. Are you talking about mandatory in-service training, mandatory upgrading or a different type of situation?

Mr. Rooney: I believe our association supports and recognizes that the most precious group we work with is students. Statistically and within research, the person who has the greatest impact outside of the home is the classroom teacher. Change is ongoing. As legislators, you may affect legislation. As classroom and practical practitioners, we respect that. We would like to be in a position to allow the expectation to be there that within a period of time you develop.

I will give you a very practical example with a particular faculty member in a particular area. You ask him to identify what is his professional plan. Obviously, part of that includes some professional growth and development. From our association's point of view, we would share with you that we have the expectation that we would constantly be relearning, rethinking and renewing ourselves. As legislators, you may see that as important to legislate.

Madam Chairman: That is a very political answer. Congratulations.

Mr. Jackson: You did not think they were going to stop learning now that they have full funding, did you?

Madam Chairman: I think we will leave that topic very quickly and go to Mr. Johnston.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the brief. It is good to be able to have more time to ask questions than we often have with the groups. We would like to go after their own personal experience a bit more.

As a point of fact, you say that 70 per cent of Ontario students do not go on to post-secondary, and we hear the figure of 65 to 70. I presume the stats were different for your system, the pre-extension Catholic system, because you were more academically oriented and those who actually did stay with the secondary level in the private school system probably were more academically motivated to move on. Do you

have any idea what the stats used to be, pre-extension, for you?

Mr. Ware: I am not sure there were statistics available on a province-wide basis, but I think our statistics would have been significantly different. We would like to say they are probably different now too.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That was my next question.

Mr. Ware: I have not seen a breakdown of them. The nature of the schools is changing a bit, but traditionally we would have more of the students who started complete. The 70 per cent figure seems pretty startling to some of us at some stages.

Really, I did not see ministry figures that broke down the number of students entering grade 9 and the number of students graduating from both public and private, but I do not think there was ever a breakdown between public schools and separate cum private Catholic high schools. I think that would be an interesting study to look at.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The reason I am interested in this, and I know it might create more work for the ministry officials—this is my first chance to ask for anything this afternoon—is that now you are getting more basic-level students in the system and are hoping to move to a greater range of options for students than you have had in the past, there is a possibility that those figures will change for you. What would be really interesting to measure at this stage, after only a few years of OSIS and only a few years of extension, would be whether already we can see a statistical change.

I do not know if it is possible to get those figures based on the pre-extension period for the Catholic system about numbers that went on and whether that is changing now that you are getting more of the basic-level students. It would be very interesting to see what our current figures are for last year, for instance, versus those for 1984-85.

Mr. Ware: I suspect those statistics would be available. There would certainly be a breakdown of the retention factor between students who started in grade 9 in the separate system four or five years ago and those who are still in the system, whether the ministry is breaking them down or the boards are doing it, to give you that kind of an analysis, I do not know.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It may be a year or two too soon as well.

Mr. Ware: That is right.

Mr. Rooney: You raise a good point in terms of research, of which we would be very supportive. We really do believe Ontario needs good research in education.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One of the things we are finding is that some of the information we would like to have is just not readily available. With regard to the kinds of questions on which I often ask for information from the ministry, it is quite problematic, I think, for it to pull together that information from various sources.

It will be interesting to see, longitudinally, just how that develops, if we can get some benchmark for the pre-extension period, especially when we come to streaming in a minute. A lot of your schools seem to be taking the approach that they do not want to move down the public system's approach to streaming. Being able to measure their outcomes would also be interesting, to see if that structure has any major effect, because the argument is being given to us by some people that that is an impediment to good education, and others are saying that it is structurally not a problem.

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The fact that you were not involved heavily in streaming before and that you did not have as full a range perhaps of students as the other system had before is a nice historical point to look at your system.

Did you want to say something, Sister Corrigan?

Sister Corrigan: Yes. I think I would like to comment on that, Mr. Johnston.

All my administrative experience has been in schools that had streams but have had tech options and a very wide variety of abilities. I would agree with Mr. Rooney that the 70-30 split shocked me very much. Though we have not had the money long enough to get into the research and to be able to put accurate numbers down, saying so many per cent, it would almost have been switched. The majority of our graduating class would have gone on to college or university, or at least would have approached grade 13 and likely university.

Mr. Rooney: I will just share a very personal anecdote. I mentioned that 10 days ago the school I am presently at graduated its 132nd class. I received a note today on my desk from this year's valedictorian. I had this lad in a grade 7 intermediate setting, who was a student at high risk, who was elected by his peers and, obviously, has moved into an advanced-level structure. I was absolutely delighted to see this

lad's personal growth, because his intermediate year when I initially had him was a year of struggle. The research we have is simply personal stories.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I might ask you a question on the potential reduction of credits from 30 to 28. This is an avenue which has been broached with us before. I would like to juxtapose this, if I could, with some other things we have been receiving from the Catholic system and, specifically, the Catholic system in Ottawa where there is a very high French immersion.

There was a request made to us by several groups that we should maybe look at moving from two religious education credits to four in a system where there are already five French credits required for the courses they are in. Basically, I raised the concern that if we move to those extra two religion credits, would we not have a problem of no options for a lot of these kids, at the same time as the arts community and others are coming in and saying that they would rather get more arts and music into our educational core at the moment?

I guess my question is, if we were to reduce to 28 and accommodate either/or the French and religious credits, what are we doing to the range of choice there in terms of options?

Mr. Rooney: You may increase it if you also adjust the compulsory nature of what you demand at the front end.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: So that would be your tradeoff, that you would reduce the mandates possibly?

Mr. Rooney: Sure.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Where is the flexibility there, in your view? What do we have more of than we need in terms of compulsory courses?

Mr. Rooney: That is a good question.

Mr. DiRocco: Perhaps the ministry could consider, if it has not already done so, another approach to the problem of credits by reconsidering what constitutes a credit and how you define a credit. If, for example, you were to define a credit in terms of 90 or 95 hours of instructional class time as opposed to 110 or 120, you could accommodate many of these changes that we are speaking of. You could have more balance in the curriculum, which many people desire. You could have more variety which, I agree, is much the same thing. You could accommodate as many as, if you want, the five French language components and the four religious credits, if people wanted that; or you could have more technological credits for those who need those

kinds of credits, more business credits for those who want those kinds of credits, and still maintain some kind of a common core curriculum that you really demand of everyone, but really, what you are doing is increasing.

During the course of a single day, for example, suppose the school was on a semester basis, by reducing the amount of instructional time, you could have five credits being earned in a particular semester instead of four. That translates to 10 credits in a given year, and over a period of four years, assuming the student was taking a full load each year, you have 40 credits. So you could change from 30 to go to 32 or 34, if you wanted, but you would be changing the definition of what constitutes a credit, and I think there is something to be said for redefining what is a credit.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But if you were redefining what is a credit, then you would not want your maximum of 28 that you are talking about.

Mr. DiRocco: No. You would move it upwards rather than downwards.

Mr. Ware: We were recommending on the old credits, the basis of 28 as the minimum. We are not saying you cannot have 33 or 34, but in this section we were focusing on the disadvantage to some of the general-level and basic-level students who are struggling to get the old 27 and now are struggling much harder to get 30.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Are you saying we should retain the 30 for the university bound?

Mr. Ware: No, we did not say that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I just want to be sure.

Mr. Ware: We said 28, but the biggest concern is we have a situation right now where we have a goodly number of students who are going to end up with 35 and 36 credits before they go on to university or to post-secondary education, but they will receive 30 credits. I have a son who graduated last year from St. Michael's High School, but it was set up in such a way that he ended up with four Ontario academic courses, so now he is back for one semester to finish it. We could certainly still have students pierce the 28, but by going from 27 to 30, we made it much more difficult for the students who are at risk, and that is where our recommendations come in. Dan's comments on the reorganization of the credits is certainly a strong option.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: If I can ask one totally unrelated question, then I will leave it open to others to come in. If there is time, I will come back, or would you like to move on right away?

Madam Chairman: Certainly, there is a lot of time.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There was a comment that was made outside of the ambit of the written presentation, but it caught my attention right away. In fact, we had a small chat about the issue in the past, and it has come up with other presenters, and that is the question about the potential major labour shortage and the impact on the education system—it was just a throwaway line essentially there—but I wonder if we could have some more commentary from you on that.

Mr. Rooney: You have already noted the statistical evidence about the potential labour shortage for teachers. There is also the labour shortage of young people in the workforce that we see in communities. I can speak personally about the fast-food industry that offers certain incentives to adolescents and that will pay them double; if they will work an hour or two in the middle of the day, they will pay them four hours. That has an impact on schools, obviously, because they often use student help; I do believe there is a labour shortage in some cases for some businesses. That is going to have an impact. We see that already in Ontario. John deals with it in a different way.

Mr. Ware: The one comment I made earlier outside was about when I was in high school in the 1950s when we had a real labour shortage. Many of my friends went to work for Bell Canada or went to particular industries as soon as they turned 16 and were trained on the job. I am suggesting there is a good possibility that we may be going into the same situation in the 1990s.

In our situation here, we may have competition for the student who feels he is not university bound, and we may be looking at different types of organizations to deliver program. It may be a combination of—I used the example of Bell, but it may be Bell Canada working with the public education system. We were talking a great deal about education being a continuum, a lifetime process. This is a personal observation, but I feel that the high school and educational system may be significantly different in the 1990s because we may have real competition for those middle students, the students who are not university bound.

We may have a disadvantage, and it may look a lot more like the schools did in the 1950s. I am saying it may, and we can certainly see the effect of what Jim was talking about regarding the fast-food industries and the various industries now that are already competing for these students. I am saying it is not just that; it is

Dominion, it is Loblaw's and it is many of those employers. A couple of my own children are working. They can get up to 20 hours a week and still go to school, and they are making good salaries. That creates a problem for a child.

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Mr. Cordiano: Can I just get a quick question on that? I just wondered what you meant by the shortage of teachers and then there is the labour shortage. I did not quite make the connection on the impact on schools statistically. If you look at it statistically, in the 1960s the birth rate dropped significantly in this province and you are seeing the effects, really, through the high schools and the elementary schools right now. It is through the elementary schools, it is going through the high schools, it will be into the universities and that same effect is going to hit the workforce. Instead of having X number, we are going to have X minus going into the workforce in the 1990s.

I suggest that people in industries and schools will be competing for that population and there may be a lot of jobs. Again, I have not looked at the statistics. This was a comment we made outside.

Mr. Ware: That is generally a view that has been bandied about. Forecasts have been made about that.

Mr. Cordiano: What I am trying to clarify here is that you suggested there would be a shortage of teachers.

Mr. Ware: There is already evidence of that.

Mr. Cordiano: It is only going to get worse, in your opinion, because it will be reflective of the general labour shortage out there.

Mr. DiRocco: Perhaps the shortage of teachers is not quite as simple as it appears. In fact, something like 8,000 to 9,000 applicants applied to the faculty of education in teachers' colleges and perhaps 1,000 will get accepted. So it is not because of a lack of applicants; it is because of a lack of placements that permit them to go through the education system and get the degree or certificate to teach and then to go into employment as teachers. It is not quite the fact that there are no teachers, but that we prevent a certain number from getting in, to begin with. We are really feeling that pinch in certain subject areas. It is very difficult to obtain teachers who are properly qualified, for example, to teach theology, to teach certain technological subjects, to teach computer science, to teach mathematics and to teach the senior sciences in high school. It is difficult to find them.

Mr. Cordiano: Some time, 12 or 15 years ago perhaps that was also true. It is a question of matching the labour force demand with labour force supply.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: We really have not done a good job of it. We even have graphs from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education showing us where the population is going. The other thing is that in our attempt to handle extension, one of the things we did was offer a retirement window for people in the public system and that window closes this year. There are a huge number of teachers who are 55 or so in that system who will take advantage of it, in my view, this year. A lot of them are in technical education and in a lot of the areas where we are already in shortage. We have only 70 teachers being trained for technical education this year in our colleges around the province. We could have a very serious problem or an awful lot of letters of understanding being written off for a couple of years, until we can make some changes there. That is an area on which the committee is probably going to have to focus in the future.

I think this issue of the labour shortage and its impact on the students and how we deal with the students in co-op education and half-time work, half-time study kinds of things, is another issue that begs a lot of questions around how we develop our curriculum and the number of hours we expect of a course, the effects of semestering or full year, options to opt in and out of. It is something we have not really dealt with a great deal as yet. That is why I wanted to speak to it when you mentioned it outside as well as in the presentation.

Mr. Mahoney: I would like to ask a question that I almost have difficulty phrasing. It is more of a philosophical question. You called it the dog days of our committee. As you know, we have been touring around and listening to many different presentations. Many of them are similar and many of them are saying the same things; sometimes the questions can get a little redundant. We have some specific issues to look at with certain parochial areas which we will continue to do, but much of the work of this committee, with regard to the mandate of the four issues particularly, has been put before us and we now are going to have to write that report.

I am curious to hear your opinion about whether things like OSIS and what I would almost call the liberation of the student in recent years have drastically changed the nature of Catholic education, from the point of view of the strong control that Catholic individual secondary

schools have always exercised over their students, their curriculum, the moral teachings and general guidance. That kind of thing has always been very strong and, whether it is or is not, it seemed to be stronger in the Catholic system than in the public system.

I would not go so far as to say the kids are taking over, but in a sense they are certainly more liberated and they are looking for more challenges. I just wonder how the Catholic secondary system has reacted to that, how you see it in light of the specific changes post-1984 and if you think it will change drastically in the future.

Sister Corrigan: I welcome that question. I believe very strongly that the student should be liberated in the sense of being able to pursue a program that he or she is capable of doing and one that draws forth the specific talents that have been given to that individual. Comparing the Robarts plan with the credit system and the freedom of OSIS, that was a breath of fresh air as far as I was concerned.

Yes, I think you are right. The guidance area, the counselling, the personal care are very much stressed as the foundation of our system. As long as that goes hand in hand with what appears to be the freedom of OSIS, I do not think the student takes over. I think the adults running the school are still very much in control, by way of direction and sharing experience and so on, but certainly the student has far more freedom under OSIS than I ever experienced before in my teaching or administrative career. I look upon that as a very good thing. I think it is still very positive, depending on wise direction of the school and caring staff.

Mr. Rooney: Philosophically, I think part of OSIS was supporting to us. We could get into a couple of areas. You mentioned guidance. What it did was, from my experience, it made sure that our counsellors and our guidance department worked with our community really well. Because there was a realization that we are not sending all our kids on to post-secondary institutions, we need, therefore, to interface, interconnect and so it was really a help to us, from my experience, to make sure you are part of the chamber of commerce in this, make sure you are part of your volunteer network. We did not have to do all of that. It helped our guidance people, from my experience.

Philosophically, one of the things that helped us and challenged us to restate again a lot about our philosophy and convictions was the expectation of codes of behaviour. That was very positive and obvious, from our experience,

where boards were mandated to do that and then schools, to make sure you communicate very clearly and respect the rights of your students and your parents but know those expectations, state the expectations clearly, state the consequence. Philosophically, that part of OSIS was supportive to our tradition.

Mr. Ware: I heard your question a little differently. What changes were there in the last five years—that is the way I heard it. It was not only OSIS. One of the things on which we build a strong sense of community in our schools, historically, was the idea of a kind of bonding in the sense of community and I do not see that this has necessarily changed.

The ownership has moved from the local religious community or the local school to a larger school board and I think the importance of ownership and community bonding and ownership of the school are still important and have to be really worked at in an expanded system. But I still see us identifying with the school philosophically and most Catholic schools work very hard at building a sense of community and a commitment to the student—pastoral commitment. I think that is very important. That is probably the reason our schools have been so successful or have been as successful as they have been.

We are still working at that and I still think that is a number one priority. That is how I heard the question.

Mr. Mahoney: It is a good response. I speak also from experience in the system and I am glad to hear that. I am glad to hear the feeling of welcoming the changes. I wonder, though—and this is not conjecture but purely a question—if (a) your existing teachers have responded as positively and (b) is there a sense—we talk about teacher shortage—that a teacher today has to be all things to all people rather than just a teacher and is it, all of a sudden, becoming a job that is impossible to do and that is therefore driving people away from the profession.

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Mr. DiRocco: The key to success to any school and to a philosophy or to a program, are the teachers. If they are committed, convinced of what it is they are about and what they are doing, what they are there for, you will see that reflected in not just their teaching, or the teaching in fact is all-encompassing. What they really do present in the classroom and outside the classroom, in the hallways or after school, in the clubs, on the fields, is themselves as people. That is what we expect of them. That is what they give us. It is not

a nine-to-three job. It is clear cut. It is not "Two plus two equal four and do not bother me about your problems; that is all I am going to teach you." No.

These are caring people and that is where the success and the real answer lie. I do not see it diminishing with the people that I am personally responsible for, if you like, interviewing and recommending for hire to my schools. I have been a founding principal of two different high schools. I have always made that my principal task. The most important single task that I will do for schools is, who do I recommend for hire? Who are these people who are going to be spending their time with these children who have been entrusted to our care?

If you choose well, as well as you can, obviously, given the restrictions that you have in terms of interviews and so on, you will find good people and they will do a wonderful job for you and for the system. I have not seen a diminishing of the commitment. If anything, I have seen in fact a further flowering of it. I see deeper commitment in these people. Maybe I happen to be very lucky with the people that I have found, but I am extremely happy with them and I think, generally speaking, that parents seem to be responding the same way. It is the same with the students.

Again, just speaking from personal experience, at my school, which began one year ago, I think we lost something like 22 students—not to dropping out; students who left the system, moved, and a number who preferred going to a public high school, but no student left education to simply quit or whatever.

I think the love for learning came from who they met in that classroom. I always tell my teachers, since this is what our system believes in and is teaching and so on, "If Jesus makes a difference to you and for you, you will make a difference for those students."

Mr. Rooney: One postscript: I think we have always philosophically had a mission statement and that is the key to staff, as you are recruiting, as you are hiring. Here is something about who we are and what we are about. Part of it is inviting the person you are potentially considering to be part of it, to say yes to that.

Mr. Mahoney: I would just finish my comments by saying that if the teachers in both systems are as dedicated as the ones you are talking about, I think it is a great sign for the future and I am not disputing your statement.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. On that optimistic note, I would like to very much thank the Ontario Catholic—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Oh, but, but, but—I have a very important question which has not been asked, I gather, which I thought would have been, but it has not had a chance to be asked, on streaming.

Madam Chairman: Go ahead and ask it.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I happened to notice that we do talk about groupings here and things of that ilk. We do not talk about streaming and I presume that is because there is no consensus, or if there is a consensus, I would like to know why it is a different consensus than that produced by OECTA proper and by many of the superintendents of the Catholic system who have been before us saying that in their view the streaming concept as it has been done in the province is antithetical to their notion of the Catholic mission of education, which is of a coherent community, a system integration and not homogeneous separation and segregation—not that I ever like to throw the cat among the pigeons.

Mr. Rooney: Yes, our executive has a consensus. Given the time constraints of the summer and opening schools, we chose very clearly to use “differentiated programming.” We will share with you, and you must keep in mind we are a voluntary association; keep in mind that fact. Sister, I would ask you to speak on this.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Paul is getting nervous about this.

Mr. Rooney: No, he is not.

Sister Corrigan: We could have used the word “streaming,” I suppose. We are in favour of “differentiated program.” My main concern, and I know I speak for many of the 400 members of our voluntary association, is that the lower part of the quoted 70 per cent does not get further disadvantaged and that we do not step back into the early 1950s in the moves that we make immediately.

Probably around this room we are all college and university graduates. It is hard to imagine what it is like—I do not speak from experience—to be the member in a class who was at the very, very bottom and who always failed or just barely made it, who never had a chance to get an A because the program included such things as Radwanski’s Chaucer and so on.

The people I am most concerned about in the two schools where I have exercised administration are the ones who are at the bottom of the barrel. I want desperately that a good program that will prepare them, not just for a job but for life, is maintained and that we do not do what we did back in the 1950s when I was in high school,

and that is to quietly shove them off, as John mentioned, into the job world.

I want them to be able to mature in an atmosphere similar to the ones we are currently offering the students operating at the basic level of difficulty. I want the special ed students who are currently integrated in some of those programs that are far too difficult for them to have access to some of those many half-credits and to be able to have in front of them things that they are capable of doing.

I say this next part personally, not for my association. I do not care quite as much what happens to the general and advanced levels. They do not suffer from the educational bandwagons that go past. The slower ones do, and they may get knocked off in this next 10-year span if we are not careful.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am concerned that people do not just react to the notion of destreaming by thinking it is going back to the 1950s. I think the notion of differentiated programming and individual educational programming is one that is acceptable within the notion of streaming and in the notion of destreaming.

I would argue that in terms of the position you are putting for the basic-level student who is not doing well, being the bottom of your vocational class in a vocational school is not a hell of a lot better than being the bottom of your generalized school system as a vocational-level kid.

My concern is around the question of heterogeneity of grouping while we try to give individualized program to give people success at their own levels and all the other kinds of things you are suggesting. That is the distinction that I have been making and that I have been hearing coming from a lot of the Catholic educational community in the last while.

Mr. Ware: I read the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association’s report and it did call for class sizes of less than 20 and massive resources and massive remediation, which we also would agree with. I think we have agreement in that respect.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Exactly. That is the premise I accept, too.

Mr. Ware: I think what we are really talking about, and there has been great debate about promotion and age-appropriate, etc., but we still have the question of the boy or the girl sitting in a secondary classroom with a core curriculum, reading at a grade 2 or grade 3 level. Perhaps this is our major concern as an association; appropriate programming for this child. We would say, as

an executive and I think as the membership—we could not poll the whole membership at this stage, but I think we have complete agreement on that—any changes have to consider this group.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I concur.

Mr. DiRocco: Sometimes there are two things that maybe get confused, the question of whether the school itself is a particular kind of school and does not offer differentiated programming within itself, like it is a vocational school and that is what it is noted for, as opposed to a comprehensive school or supposedly just a collegiate, academically oriented, where everybody is going to be aiming to go to university and that is it.

I do not think we are saying we are in favour of streamed schools—that is, that we ought to have vocational schools, we ought to have just technical schools and so on—but I think we are saying that within the comprehensive high school there is room for differentiated programming.

I do not like the word “streaming” because it suggests that you are manipulating people and that you slot these people along here and along there and it is something you are doing to them; whereas “differentiation” is recognizing them for what they are and offering them a program that answers those needs.

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Maybe it is a moot point or a very subtle difference, but I prefer that subtlety to the bluntness of simply saying that we are manipulating people. There is always the possibility of abuses in the streaming you are speaking of. We recognize that, but it is not due to the fact that there is a process called streaming in place but rather that there are people who are lacking in knowledge and who do not know how to identify problems—maybe for lack of a better word to use to refer to a challenge that is being presented by the student. If there are abuses or potential abuses, you get rid of those abuses. You do not necessarily throw out everything with it. That is the approach we take.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I can feel the chairman's eyes burning into me so I cannot continue to speak, which I would love to do at another time because I think there are some contradictions around the concept of homogeneity in large groupings, whether it is in a composite school or a strictly vocational school.

If you look at the statistics of the outcomes of those kids, I think that is borne out. I will not talk about it because I know the chairman does not want me to.

Madam Chairman: I do not think you gave Mr. Johnston the answer he was manipulating to get. Mr. Johnston, can I say goodbye now? Are you finished?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You can say goodnight now if you want to.

Madam Chairman: As I was saying before we had that stimulating dialogue, I would like to thank the principals for coming before us today. We very much appreciate the benefit of your collective century of wisdom. I think it was a very stimulating dialogue.

Our final presentation today will be by the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association. Mr. Recollet, please bring your group forward. Welcome back to our committee. We have your very comprehensive brief before us.

I would just point out to members that you received a copy of the brief in advance. A revised copy of it has now been distributed. Look for the copy which does not have the exhibit stamp on. That is the recent one.

When I was perusing your brief last night, I was struck by how appropriate your title was. We have talked so much about living and learning, but the title of your brief is *What You Are Teaching Isn't What I Am Living and Learning*. I thought that was very appropriate. Please begin whenever you are ready and start by introducing yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

ONTARIO METIS AND ABORIGINAL ASSOCIATION

Mr. Recollet: I would like to thank this committee for allowing us to appear for the second time on a very important issue, education.

To my left, I have Olaf Bjornaa. He is our second vice-president. To my immediate right I have Jim Baker, a high school teacher at the SEE school, which is the school of experiential education. To my far right, I have with me today Yvonne Hastings, who is our aboriginal educational consultant. We also have, sitting behind Olaf, Henry Wetelainen, our first vice-president. I am Charles Recollet, president of the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association.

The Metis and nonstatus Indian people in Ontario try to exist as people of two cultures. They must try to assimilate to the cultural values of an educational system still based on 19th century Anglo-European values while at the same time trying to preserve an indigenous culture that blends native values and lifestyle with that of traditions of various European cultures. In the 19th century, public education

had a hidden agenda that aimed at encouraging assimilation and cultural uniformity. For people of aboriginal heritage, this often consisted of visible policies of cultural devaluation and subsequent loss of self-image.

"Re the Indian student, Clifford Tobias, I beg to say that his academic standing might be sufficient, especially if his term standing in high school were uniformly good. But he could not teach them horticulture and agriculture. I would not advise putting any Indian in charge of an Indian school. These children require to have the Indian educated out of them, which only a white teacher can help to do.

"It would be much better to select a white, returned soldier of equal or higher attainments, and make an effort to provide a home for him on the Indian reserve, near the school.

"An Indian is always and only an Indian and has not the social, moral and intellectual standard required to elevate these Indian children, who are quite capable of improvement."

That was from a letter from Chatham, Ontario, to the Deputy Minister of Education, Toronto, Ontario, November 29, 1918.

The education system perpetuates this hidden cultural bias in a less obvious way by using grade promotion and streaming to indicate learning levels and achievement. The Metis and native children enter the school system with experiences and values that are frequently different from those of the dominant culture. This places them at a distinct disadvantage in an educational system which sorts and rewards students by criteria that are not relevant to the Metis culture.

For many years, the literature and history taught in the schools mentioned Metis people only in terms of the early fur trade and the Riel rebellions, and generally presented aboriginal people as social problems once their function of being Indian allies ceased to be important in the economic and military conflicts between European powers. The resiliency and adaptive nature of the Metis and native culture was seldom recognized or appreciated. The common experience of Metis and native children was that they did not fit or belong in the culture which the school represented.

The educational system maintained this unspoken bias against ethnicity until the 1950s, and in many ways it has remained a hidden agenda.

Paul Corrigan, author of *Schooling the Smash Street Kids*, tried to understand the discrepancy between stated and unstated educational goals and the realities of how the educational system was interpreted by working class children. He

went back into the parliamentary debates surrounding the establishment of public education in Britain, a system which formed the basis for education in Ontario. He found that although there is a stated purpose of information transfer from one generation to another, there is a forgotten hidden agenda of the educational system which is quickly identified by many students, especially those not from the Anglo-European cultural background.

"In looking at these reports we can see a particular 'sort of education being proposed': an education with specific aims in the direction of changing the lives and attitudes of the working class; an education which had as its hallmark a transference of a system of morality."

The Education Act states that among the duties of a teacher is the obligation "to inculcate by precept and example respect for religion and the principles of Judaeo-Christian morality and the highest regard for truth, justice, loyalty, love of country, humanity, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, purity, temperance and all other virtues." That comes from paragraph 235(c).

What is apparent is the realization that the school serves three functions: one is the inculcation of middle-class values of thrift, hard work, punctuality, obedience and politeness; another is the transfer of selected knowledge and values appropriate to one's perceived future place in society, and the other is to stream students into groups prepared to assume their appropriate role in society—one stream with the values and skills appropriate to the world of industry and the other to the elitist careers of administration and control that require a university degree as an entrance qualification.

The educational policies such as grade promotion and early streaming into specific programs unintentionally compound some of the problems faced by Metis children. We would like to point out some of the issues that are involved in these practices at the elementary school level and to comment on the way the pattern is extended into the secondary school through semestering and OSIS.

Observations and generalizations about Metis and aboriginal experience in the schools:

1. A differing cultural background provides preschool experiences that are valuable life skills but which tend not to prepare the child for the demands and structure of school. In addition, for many Metis and native children, English is a second language at home. As a result, the children often experience difficulty in primary

grades and fall behind classmates, especially in the reading and language arts.

2. A common defence pattern involves a retreat from school involvement through withdrawal into silence and isolation or acting out behaviour that is discouraged and punished by the school.

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3. Because many Metis and native children are unable to connect with curriculum content in a meaningful way, they tend to remain alienated from the value system and fail to develop the specific skills that support long-term success in school.

4. Metis and native children often find school structure and regimentation alienating and incomprehensible from their cultural perspective.

5. These children report being punished for infractions of rules without an appreciation of the cause which may be rooted in the family or cultural environment.

6. Metis and native students often feel stereotyped and classified as a group and not acknowledged as individuals.

7. They often feel isolated and misunderstood, acquire a negative self-image and question the appropriateness of school to their lives.

8. The above factors frequently result in Metis and native children being placed in streams where expectations of academic performance are lower.

9. Metis and native children end up clustered in classes with others who share the nonacademic outlook and the feelings of personal inadequacy and may be stigmatized by their peer group within the social interactions of the school.

10. Because school appears irrelevant and creates many negative experiences and a sense of failure, many Metis and native children become dropouts at an early age.

Factors that condition Metis and aboriginal school performance: Many factors determine children's success or failure in the school system. Preschool experiences, cultural socialization as well as social and personal development are important in determining the child's readiness to engage in school learning. This is especially true of a minority culture. The Metis and aboriginal children begin their education in a culturally different system which is based on predominantly Anglo-European middle class values.

"By the time children arrive in first grade, their educational futures have already been shaped to a significant degree by early learning experiences." This is by George Radwanski, 1987, page 123.

Although these children have often learned survival skills in their own Metis and native culture, they may not have had the learning experience that will help them progress academically in school, and therefore, appear less ready for academic learning.

For example, the culture presented in school curricula and valued in school performance and grading is one that is highly verbal, competitive and achievement oriented. These values may not have the same ranking in the hierarchy of Metis and native values.

It is expected that a child who is beginning to read should have a vocabulary of approximately 5,000 spoken words. For some Metis and native children, English is a second language. They may not have the necessary required vocabulary or the children may come from single-parent or low-income homes where economic survival is a major concern and therefore less emphasis has been placed on reading stories to children, encouraging conversation, etc.

A child's ability to read and manipulate language is critical to his or her placement within the classroom. Decisions are made for the child that determine which level is appropriate. A low-level placement may encourage a low teacher expectation which frequently becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy for the child.

Frequently, the reading material in school curricula is based on social concepts that are not part of the life experience of Metis children. They may find the concepts foreign to their experience and feel excluded from discussions of common experience shared by their classmates.

When students arrive at school from a family without a rich oral and reading background, the school must provide programs and experiences which compensate for this early deficiency or the child will be forever disadvantaged in the school system.

"In listening to stories long before he can read himself, the child is beginning to gain experience of the sustained meaning-building organization of written language and of its characteristic rhythm and structures. He is also learning to pay attention to the linguistic message as the major source of meaning." This is by G. Wells, 1986, page 183.

Ned McKeown, director of the Toronto Board of Education, notes that the direction and focus of public education changes after grade 3. The language development program which acts as a support system to bring a child up to grade-appropriate language skills is superseded by a curriculum geared to preparing graduates who

can function in a working world—course content with which middle class children can most easily identify.

"There is no question that the kinds of experiences useful in the world of work tend to be ones that are less available to the inner-city child." This is from the *Toronto Star* of January 5, 1988.

At the junior level, grades 4 to 6 inclusive, the necessary language support that can help Metis and Indian children survive in the academic mainstream is de-emphasized and replaced by an emphasis on the values, concepts and behaviours that underlie the assumptions of an industrialized society. Although culturally different, native children may share some of the negative experiences characteristic of inner-city environments.

In areas where social difficulties exist, learning readiness may be affected. If the children are from a low-income group, they may have environmental problems in common with other children from low incomes related to lack of rest, poor nutrition, inter and intrafamily stress.

Many Metis and Indian children begin school with those disadvantages and although they may have the ability to learn, they often cannot cover the work as rapidly as others in the classroom and require emotional and physical support, almost on a daily basis, in order to function at a stage of learning readiness. If they do not receive this support, they face repeating a primary grade.

Other cultural difficulties native children face which affect their school performance are:

They may be unaccustomed to rigid time schedules. They may have come from backgrounds in which they are encouraged to be self-sufficient and in which they make their own decisions. They may have grown up in a native culture that values a self-initiated approach to learning skills when they appear necessary to the life of the individual. They may have life skills learned at an early age at home which are not recognized or valued by the school system and which do not appear in the curriculum as skills worth teaching.

They must participate in a school structure that requires training for school-appropriate group behaviour and conformity to rules. Native culture stresses the reliance of the individual on personal resources and places a much higher value on the authority and demands of the extended family group rather than on the authority and demands of the school which, to them, represents the values of the dominant Anglo-European culture.

In other words, native children are trying to succeed in a culture that is not their own by mastering what is considered to be the norm of that culture. Judgement of worthiness is endemic to the school system based on performance in specified skills valued by the dominant culture. All of these factors place the child at a disadvantage.

Grade promotions create a sense of personal failure in the child when he or she is not promoted to the next grade. Some children learn that no matter how hard they try, they fail. Others learn that the clever students pass to another grade and infer that, since they do not, they must be stupid. This leads to a poor self-image and a sense of futility and inferiority, which affects the desire to participate and succeed.

Couple this low self-image with the problems already encountered in reading and math skills and a situation is created that sets the child on a downward spiral in which a lack of confidence leads to reluctance to participate, producing a pattern that may lead eventually to dropping out in high school or earlier.

The native child who has encountered these difficulties may identify with other children who have similar attitudes. This group may block out the whole educational process in an effort to ease the inner feelings of inadequacy. Group behaviour often becomes unruly and the group members face social consequences both with teachers and peers. This can continue into high school.

"Retreating students are reluctant to maintain a charade of acceptable behaviour. When they can, they reject not only the school's goals but the available means for learning. The truant, the selective class cutter, the chronically tardy student, the pupils caught smoking in bathrooms or hanging out behind the stairs—these are the young people who withdraw to the margins of situations they see as increasingly absurd or hopeless. Their perceptions are generally confirmed when parents or school officials stigmatize and punish them without providing avenues for productive participation....For students in retreat, the way they feel themselves to be different becomes the most important element to their public identity....The symbols of this new status and identity, such as clothes, speech, posture and mannerisms, serve to heighten social visibility and to attract further behaviour-confirming treatment by peers and by the school."

This was by R. Sinclair and J. Ghory, called *Reaching the Marginal Students: A Primary Concern for School Renewal*.

In summary, the grade promotion system can be destructive. Failure can create attitudes in the child in the early elementary school years that are often carried for life. Positive attitudes and self-image are encouraged and developed by personal involvement and identification with what is happening in the classroom.

Each child needs to be helped to develop a strong and positive sense of self and not be stigmatized by failure at an early age. It is especially important for native children not to be perceived as failures in an educational system whose standards are conditioned by expectations that are dominantly Anglo-European, but which are not related to their culture.

Streaming students in school is a sorting process. "A capitalist society driven by competition demands that schools determine which students are winners and which are losers." That is from the *Toronto Star*, August 30, 1988.

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"In Ontario, kids have to be sorted so we determine who gets the good life, who goes on to university and gets the high paying jobs. Those who don't get all this get disenchanting pretty early." That is from A. King, quoted in "Will High Schools Try to Bend More," *Toronto Star*, August 30, 1988.

Students are streamed according to academic success achieved in a study of what is in effect a curriculum emphasizing white, middle-class values and concepts. Many native students have difficulty relating to this curriculum, become low achievers and are frequently streamed into the basic level.

The end result is that the lower stream, or basic level, becomes weighted with students from low income groups or minority groups such as aboriginal people. It eventually, perhaps unintentionally, becomes a stream whereby the streaming process separates the students into social and racial groups. Current stats show that 79 per cent of the students in the basic vocational stream drop out before receiving a high school graduation diploma.

Many native students find themselves counselled into the basic level because they have been students who have experienced difficulties in the elementary system. Streaming them into the basic level seldom solves their original difficulties related to school performance. The tendency to reinforce negative concepts of self and of education in general is simply perpetuated.

There is also the possibility that a teacher may be insensitive to a different culture such as that of aboriginal people and have lower expectations of

the Metis and Indian student. A student may sense the teacher's attitude and perceive himself or herself as a lower achiever who should choose the basic level.

Many native parents do not have the academic sophistication to question the system and have difficulty challenging the streaming system.

The following excerpt from Radwanski's report refers to socioeconomically disadvantaged children, but applies equally to children of native origin:

"What seems abundantly clear is that instead of providing socioeconomically disadvantaged children with genuine equality of opportunity by helping them to overcome their initial learning disadvantages, our school system, at present, has the unintended effect of relegating large numbers of these children to lower tiers of education characterized by low expectations and lack of clearly defined outcomes, from which they are statistically unlikely to graduate and in which they will have learned comparatively little even if they do remain to completion." That is found on page 78 of his report.

Bernard Shapiro, Ontario Deputy Minister of Education, stated that the consensus among educators is to delay the streaming process until after Grade 10—*Toronto Star*, August 30, 1988. This appears to be a step in the right direction, and hopefully a step towards the eventual elimination of the streaming concept from the educational system.

Semestering or the concentrated learning of a few subjects in a five-month period has a few advantages, but many disadvantages for native children.

Advantages: A credit can be acquired in a relatively short period of time. Students who might drop out of a program that takes a full year to accomplish can often survive for the five months it takes to complete a credit in the semester system.

The semester system helps focus the student on fewer credits and helps to organize his or her time and attention in limited areas and provides a daily sequential building of skills and knowledge.

Disadvantages: Because a great deal of content needs to be covered in a short period of time, a student who experiences adjustment problems may soon become overwhelmed by the amount of homework and the volume of new material that is dealt with in each class. Many students benefit from tutorial assistance and extended practice before moving on to new material. In a

semestered course, there is little time for catch-up and remediation.

Regular attendance is necessary in a semestered program. A student who misses classes falls behind quickly and there is no time for catch-up. Aboriginal students may be absent from class for reasons of cultural imperatives such as seasonal employment that may require families to move from one location to another; students may be required to augment the family income with traditional occupations such as harvesting wild rice, trapping, etc.; adolescent students are often required to assist at home with younger children when family emergencies arise; adolescent students often have family rearing responsibilities that prevent full-time or even regular attendance. A student who misses several days for reasons that may be culturally specific falls quickly behind and finds it extremely difficult to catch up. The amount of work that needs to be done tends to compound at a discouraging rate. The aboriginal student is often forced into making a cultural choice between school and family that has serious implications for successful completion of school credits. For the semester system to help native children reach their educational potential, there must be support systems that bridge the gaps between cultural, lifestyle and educational demands.

OSIS: The reorganization of education in Ontario created a number of policy statements that could be used to improve the educational experiences and success of aboriginal people by encouraging the development of public alternative schools and programs, by offering programs at the basic, general and advanced levels of difficulty and by suggesting that bilateral and multilateral classes can be used to accommodate student learning differences and to expand student program choices in small or remote schools.

Most schools appear relatively unaffected to any great extent by these recommendations. Streaming into three program levels and separating the different levels, often by placing them in different schools, continues the social separation and ranking and stigmatization of students. In practice, the OSIS requirements work against the student who does not intend to continue in post-secondary education by increasing the number of compulsory credits and creating a common graduation diploma requiring successful completion of 30 credits. This new graduation diploma works for university-bound students, reducing the diploma requirements from 33 to 30.

For the non-university-bound student, a category in which currently the vast majority of the aboriginal people are located, it increases the graduation requirements from 27 to 30 credits. The requirement of additional credits for graduation is a major incentive for students not highly connected to the school system to quit. Principals have the power to excuse students from a compulsory course such as French and to substitute another credit. This power appears to be used sparingly.

Radwanski points out another difficulty that may have greater impact on aboriginal children than on other groups:

"The individualization of course choice may work to the detriment of students from less educated, lower-socioeconomic-status households. While better-educated parents with high expectations are likely to advise and/or require their children to take courses that are relevant and beneficial, students from less supportive environments have a higher likelihood of drifting into whatever seems easy or fun."

He also sees a problem in the numbers game with the credit system:

"The credit system may contribute to the dropout problem by discouraging students who fall behind in credit accumulation. If a student in fourth year knows that at the end of the year he will still be four credits short of the required 30—or short one required credit in a mandatory subject he has previously failed—the temptation to just walk away is considerable."

For students who already feel that the education system is pointless and irrelevant to them, additional compulsory credits and an increase in the number of credits required for graduation is enough to make them drop out. Faced with the prospect of the limited potential and the personal irrelevance to the aboriginal cultures of 30 basic-level credits, work or welfare seems a more logical alternative.

Recommendations: It is critically important for this committee to recognize that aboriginal rights cannot be equated with the rights of visible minorities, women or the handicapped, or indeed with the rights of Canadian citizenship. Aboriginal rights differ in kind, not in degree.

Like all peoples, aboriginal nations have their inherent right of self-government. Our peoples belonged to various self-governing Indian nations at the time of European contact. Neither our forefathers nor we have ever surrendered our right to self-government, nor could we surrender the right that belongs to future generations of aboriginal peoples as much as to us. No treaty or

legislation of any kind has extinguished the right of self-government. It is an existing right.

The right of self-government includes the right to determine how our children will be educated. Nevertheless, non-native governments have imposed a foreign system of education on our people. It should come as no surprise that a system which was not designed by us has failed our people.

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The Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association, along with other organizations representative of aboriginal peoples and communities, has proposed negotiations towards the recognition in the Canadian constitution of a third order of government, aboriginal government, the first two being the federal and provincial levels of government. We have also proposed that the governments of Ontario and Canada enter into formal negotiations with OMAA on how the right of aboriginal self-government will be implemented and exercised alongside and in co-operation with the federal and provincial jurisdictions. In exercising our right of self-government, we do not propose or intend to attack or threaten the Canadian federation or disrupt the institutions of the federal and provincial governments. We propose to exercise our right of self-government in an orderly and efficient manner alongside the governments of Ontario and Canada.

In the area of education we have proposed the following:

1. Primary and secondary levels:

(a) Aboriginal-controlled education boards for aboriginal peoples or, where numbers or proportions of students, economics or the wishes of the community do not warrant such boards, statutory, secured and meaningful representation of aboriginal governments, parents and elders on the school and education boards of other authorities.

(b) Parity between aboriginal-controlled schools—schools with sufficient proportions of aboriginal students—and the accepted norm in Ontario and Canada in facilities, funding, teacher qualifications, teacher-student ratios, standards and results.

(c) Adequate provision of kindergarten, primary and secondary schools in rural areas and in major urban centres that have significant aboriginal populations to reduce nonattendance and alleviate the need for excessive daily busing and relocation of children to dormitory schools.

(d) Each of the five zonal territories of OMAA and the city of Toronto to have at least one high

school for the exclusive use of aboriginal youth; a high school for the use of both aboriginal and nonaboriginal youths may be adequate, provided that the aboriginal communities of the region have statutory and meaningful representation on the school board, and provided also that the curriculum accommodates aboriginal interests, perspectives and values.

(e) Incentives in pay and conditions and special professional awards and recognition to attract the better-qualified, skilled and experienced teachers to take and retain positions in those northern rural schools that have significant numbers and proportions of aboriginal students.

(f) Mandatory academic and practicum elements in provincial teacher training programs relating to the constitutional and political rights of aboriginal peoples, their histories, cultures and social systems, their objectives and goals and their contemporary economic and living conditions.

(g) A specialized teacher training college, a specialized stream in existing colleges which accommodates aboriginal languages and specialized subject matter and special preparation for work in aboriginal and northern communities.

(h) Career training for aboriginal and non-aboriginal teachers who wish to become senior administrators in aboriginal-controlled schools.

(i) The systematic research, preparation, publication and dissemination throughout the school system of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials that take serious account of aboriginal history, rights, cultures, perspectives and values and the integration of such knowledge into the core substance of all academic programs.

(j) Services to diagnose, counsel and support aboriginal children with learning disabilities and other physical, neurological or physiological impediments to normal progress in studies or in the development of life skills.

(k) Academic and career counselling services attuned to and supportive of the ambitions of aboriginal peoples to progress to technical and higher studies, the professions, trades and business.

(l) The statutory and meaningful accommodation on all school boards of representatives of aboriginal communities and, where required by the aboriginal community, the provision of classes in aboriginal languages, as defined by the aboriginal community from grade 1 through to grade 13.

(m) The adjustment of standard tests, examinations and evaluations in the Ontario education

system to include knowledge, values and references from aboriginal contexts so that aboriginal students will not continue to be disadvantaged by measurements that assume the inevitable universality or superiority of nonaboriginal contexts.

2. Upgrading:

(a) Two centres, one in Toronto and one in a mid-northern urban location, where aboriginal peoples may upgrade their literacy in the English or French languages and mathematics, be coached in life skills and receive counselling and referrals relating to job-related training, apprenticeships and further education.

(b) Three new post-secondary colleges, or a single college with three distinct campuses, controlled by aboriginal peoples but open to students of any origin, which have the following specializations: (i) technical trades for natural resource industries; (ii) technical training for community government and community development; and (iii) business, management and accounting; the three colleges or campuses to co-ordinate their curricula and activities and be governed by a single board appointed by all the local aboriginal governments in Ontario, the colleges or campuses to be integrated into the Ontario college system and their credits to be portable and interchangeable throughout the Canadian post-secondary system.

3. University and college level:

(a) All Ontario universities and colleges to accept knowledge of an aboriginal language and either French or English as fulfillment of any and all entrance requirements for either a first or a second language.

(b) All Ontario universities and colleges to have a specialist attached to the admissions office whose sole function is to recruit and facilitate the admission of aboriginal students to all general, special and professional programs.

(c) All Ontario universities and colleges to provide special tutorials or counselling to assist disadvantaged aboriginal students meet the academic requirements of the programs.

(d) All professional schools to have a minimum quota for aboriginal students and in their curricula to provide for some degree of specialization on the application of that profession to aboriginal situations.

(e) Three Ontario universities to provide both graduate and post-graduate programs on: (i) business, management and economic development in aboriginal situations; (ii) law in aboriginal situations; and (iii) the self-governing institutions of aboriginal peoples.

4. Institute of research on aboriginal society, culture and language:

(a) An Ontario-wide institute of research on aboriginal society and culture, its board of governors to be appointed by the regional aboriginal governments, to be affiliated with, but not controlled or administered by, one or more Ontario universities: to do research on all aspects of aboriginal society and culture, the production of reports, textbooks and curricula for use by other educational institutions; to develop, teach and advocate new and experimental programs in the sciences, arts, trades and professions for aboriginal peoples; its credits to be portable and interchangeable within the Canadian post-secondary and professional system.

5. Intergovernmental institute:

(a) An Ontario-wide intergovernmental institute with a board of governors to include equal representatives of the governments of Canada, Ontario and the territorial aboriginal government: its principal function to research the constitutional, legislative, administrative, fiscal and other practical implications of aboriginal governments in Ontario and Canada and advise on the technical implications of alternative models, systems and institutions of aboriginal government and of institutions to manage intergovernmental relations; to produce studies, reports, texts, textbooks and other teaching and learning materials; to host, organize and deliver workshops, seminars and accredited programs in its area of specialty.

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In addition to the foregoing proposals and in recognition of the fact that some of our proposals might require protracted negotiations prior to implementation, we make the following recommendations for immediate changes to the existing Ontario government-run school system.

Grade promotion:

That the current policy of grade promotion in a school be abolished and be replaced with a system that allows continuous progress at individual rates within the traditional divisions of primary, junior and intermediate. Promotion would occur from one division to another, rather than by grade. Progress would be measured by unit accomplishment, which may take more or less time than a traditional academic year.

Streaming:

That the current practice of streaming students into academic, general and basic courses of study be abolished and replaced by bilevel, multigrade classes.

Semestering:

1. Alternative programs, one of which could be semestering, which provide a range of varied units of study that could be accomplished in differing amounts of time, should be available to students. These could include different combinations of structured classroom teaching, peer tutoring, independent study, mentorships and community-based learning activities.

2. Where traditional semestered programs are in place, short-term learning clinics, peer assistance and mentoring opportunities should be created to assist those students who, through absence, personal difficulties or skill deficiencies, find themselves falling behind.

OSIS:

1. That a study be undertaken to examine the impact of the 30-credit requirement for graduation on disadvantaged students and students who do not anticipate post-secondary school training.

2. That opportunities should exist for recognizing and validating the successful completion of a specified portion of the requirements towards a graduation diploma.

3. That greater emphasis be directed to the granting of partial credits for units of work and that credits be organized on a basis of self-contained modulars and mini-courses which can be accomplished in short periods of time.

Aspects of current policies of grade promotion, streaming, semestering and OSIS requirements discriminate unfairly against aboriginal students. The original intent of these policies was to help our students achieve their educational goals. For some students, this may still be true. For students of aboriginal descent, these policies serve as a means to remove them from the mainstream of society.

Their success rate in the existing education system is minimal and their dropout rate is extremely high. They end up with neither the skills the education system was designed to develop nor the diploma that gives them the access to jobs. For many of these students, school is a path towards dependency on society and the welfare institutions rather than an avenue for personal growth or social change.

That concludes the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association's brief.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Mahoney): Thank you very much. The chair had to leave for another pressing engagement, but we do have some questioners. I would ask Mr. Adams and Mr. Johnston to recognize our time constraints in having to get to Thunder Bay this evening. However, you may have some questions.

Mr. Adams: I think you know that, in addition to your own, we have had some very fine presentations from native groups. Indeed there were some yesterday, and we have some more tomorrow from Treaty 3.

I would also like to say that I myself have been involved with a native economic development program, for example, in trying to move native students into business areas and things like that. I have also been involved with native studies programs. I mentioned yesterday that almost 40 universities across Canada now offer native studies programs.

I mention those things to show you that I am interested in the Indian side of what you said. When I read your brief last night, and now, following the revised one today—and I also read the statement of philosophy—I was actually wondering what you might have to say for the Metis part of your membership.

When I read the previous brief, I looked for places where the Metis were treated distinctly. In reality, almost always you say "Metis and native" or "native and Metis." In the previous brief—except in one place, on page 15, which was changed—where you used "Metis" on its own, it could in fact have been interchanged with "native."

I think it would be very interesting to this committee to have your views on the special needs of the Metis. If I might elaborate; it seems to me there might be particular transcultural problems. That is one. Two, I know there are and have been Metis languages and dialects, some of which have already died out, which are really quite special and related to the particular Metis group that was there, and also Metis cultures, which relate to the particular native side of their identity and the particular European side of their identity. I have seen books and papers written on these Metis cultures.

You mentioned your research institute, and I mentioned to you that there are almost 40 native studies programs across the country, but I have never heard of a Metis institute or a Metis program. I simply wondered if you thought there was a place in Ontario, not necessarily for either of those two things but for something special focusing on the Metis people.

Mr. Recollet: Yes. In your opening remarks, I certainly want to make reference to what you term the word "Indian." As you know, the name of our organization is the Ontario Metis Aboriginal Association. Basically, we use "Metis" because many of our people who are Metis are half-breeds from prior to the Red River settle-

ments and the era of Louis Riel, but historically we like to have Metis included for the remembrance of many of the descendants of the Louis Riel era. At the same time, we also have aborigines or half-breeds who lived prior to his era and after his era. There are still half-breeds and Metis people all over this country who have no recognition.

The other part of the organization's name, "aboriginal," makes reference to the definition of aboriginal people as it presents itself in the Canadian Constitution. We are recognized as Metis, Indian and Inuit. When we talk about "Indian" in our association, it means basically an Indian not governed by the Indian Act and not residing on a reserve, according to our constitution's bylaws.

If our organization goes after a separate educational institution, we do not like to separate our constituency base—the Metis and aboriginal people living off reserve, or the Metis and native, or the Metis and Indian. It all depends on who is defining what.

We see the Metis as belonging to our association, we try to work as a unit. A good example is yourself. You are trying to define whom we represent. We represent all aboriginal people living off reserve, with a special distinction for the Metis.

Our association is not designed to confine itself to an all-women's group or an all-men's club. We are not an elitist type of group. We are not a specialized aboriginal group. We represent all aboriginal men, youth, women and elders living off reserve. We still recognize a special place in history for the Metis, descendants of the Red River settlements.

As far as we are concerned, if we continue to proceed along the lines of trying to get the process of self-government going, which may include an educational institution down the road, our membership, aboriginal people living off reserve, will be included, Metis or Indian not governed by the Indian Act.

Mr. Adams: The sentence I was referring to says, "There is a possibility that a teacher may be insensitive to the different culture, such as that of the Metis and aboriginal people, and have lower expectations of the Metis student."

Mr. Recollet: That may be just a typing error. Possibly it should have read "Metis and native."

Mr. Adams: Thank you very much.

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Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is too bad this is the last one of the day, and we are sort of sagging,

realizing we have to take a flight and do another day of trying to accumulate more information.

Mr. Recollet: Maybe next time they will put us on at nine o'clock. That would take up the whole day.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The combination of your two reports is very helpful to us, though; I just wanted to express that to you. This is a very detailed report and very precise in terms of what you want and very useful for us in those terms. As we compile our recommendations, the research officer will put these in order so we can cross-reference them with others and understand how they fit in.

I have one specific clarification that I really want to ask about. You talk about two centres for upgrading that you would like; then right after that you get to the community college concept of three campuses. I am wondering if in your mind those things need to be mutually exclusive or, if the three-campus notion of the colleges were to be developed, whether or not the upgrading in fact might take place on those campuses rather than in two separate facilities as you are suggesting and make it part of the ongoing linkage for those colleges.

Mr. Recollet: Those are basically our recommendations for a whole system throughout Ontario, and we are posing them as recommendations to you to review. If any one of these recommendations is considered seriously, then I think those doors will be open for how we proceed.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But you can see how those two things might be sort of melded or you take what you can get, one or the other sort of thing?

Mr. Recollet: Right.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Okay. I was not sure if you saw them as having such distinct functions that you would have to have the two separate institutions.

Mr. Baker: In actual fact, I think there are models that do exist that incorporate the two. Trent University, for instance, does a diploma program, which is essentially an upgrading program from which you can go into the degree program also. I think it is quite feasible.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That was one of the reasons it twiggled with me. The other reason is that there is some discussion now, finally after all these years, about having some kind of French community college. At the moment, we do not have that system, let alone anything but bilingual capacity at the university level. In a sense, the

timing of this kind of suggestion is quite appropriate.

Yesterday, as Mr. Adams was saying, we had the two presentations from status organizations. There are parallels with the kinds of things you are talking about. I am wondering if there has been much communication between you and those organizations in terms of the development of this college concept, which they did not speak to directly at all, but in which I am sure they would be interested in terms of how your interests and their interests might be incorporated.

Mr. Recollet: We have not heard from our status Indian brothers and sisters living on reserve. As I mentioned to Mr. Adams, our document is based on off reserve. Those are our aboriginal constituents, and their numbers are far greater than those living on reserve.

As far as recommendations are concerned, these are our recommendations. I do not know what they recommended to this committee—I have not had a chance to see those—but the doors will be open for consultation. At the same time if they are looking at some sort of college or post-secondary school or facility on reserve, then that becomes a federal jurisdiction.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: No, they were not talking about that. I am just thinking specifically around the community college notion that you are addressing here. I would be surprised if it would not be of interest to them again as an off-reserve kind of project. Clearly, the co-ordination would be key in terms of how it operates.

I wonder if the clerk could make sure that the other presentations are forwarded to Mr. Recollet's group so he can see what their presentations said. If there is anything that the two or three groups would like to work on together, that would be also useful for us to know in terms of where there is consensus on each other's position. That would also be just interesting to know.

Mr. Bjornaa: As it is now—I think the report spells it out quite clearly—we are treated as off-reserve natives, all off-reserve Metis and

nonstatus. As it is right now, the reserve has not accepted back the Bill C-31 people, and we have the C-31 people coming to us like you cannot believe. We have a stream of them who are looking for education, college and university, you name it. For us to go to them now, we are saying right now to them at times we have these Bill C-31 people and they say, "Hold it." They are coming to us, and we are here right now as representing them right here where the reserve has not represented them.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I understand that there are political considerations to be taken into account, let me just put it that way, but for instance, they came to us with some very specific notions around language that are not specifically addressed in your brief, which you should probably have a look at just from the point of view of a committee like ours of knowing where there is consensus and where there is a political different of opinion. That would just be an interesting followup for us to have from you at some point and from them, because it would seem to me there is some mutual interest in some of these things and there may be difference of opinion. It would just be interesting for us to know where the distinctions are made, if you have time. We will send you their reports, and if you wish to respond, then please do, and if you do not think it is appropriate, do not bother.

Mr. Recollet: You want to know if we had any consultation with the other status organizations on reserve. No.

The Acting Chairman: Okay. We will ensure that you get a copy of that document. If you wish to reply back to the committee, that would be appreciated.

I would like to thank you for coming and for taking the time and the trouble to put together a very extensive brief and for taking the time to come and present it to our committee today.

This committee will stand adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

The committee adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Organization of the Education Process

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Thursday, September 29, 1988



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday, September 29, 1988

The committee met at 10 a.m. in the Scandia room of the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN ONTARIO (continued)

Madam Chairman: I would like to open this session of the select committee on education as we continue our review of the organization of the education process in Ontario. We are very pleased to be in Thunder Bay this morning and we are looking forward to hearing your presentations. We will start with the Lakehead Women Teachers' Association. Will you come forward, please.

Welcome to our committee. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time and we are hoping there will be lots of time during that half-hour period for questions from the members. I notice your brief is indeed that—brief, succinct and to the point. We really welcome that type of presentation, so we have lots of opportunity for questions. Please begin whenever you wish and start by identifying each of yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

LAKEHEAD WOMEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Dromisky: I would like to start by saying we really appreciate having this opportunity to come and make this presentation. Lakehead Women Teachers' Association is the Thunder Bay local branch of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. This professional organization comprises a little more than 33,000 women elementary teachers in Ontario; locally, we have 450 members.

The group you see before you presenting this morning is what I am going to call our backup crew because our two main presenters, unfortunately, were unable to come at the very last minute. We hope we will be able to be helpful and present it effectively.

I would like to introduce Peggy Graham on my right. Peggy Graham is a newly retired teacher and enjoying her freedom. She is also still very active in our local association and sits on our executive as a representative for the Superannuated Teachers of Ontario from this area. She has

taught primary classes for most of her teaching career. She is a specialist in early childhood education and was a primary consultant for the board as well. She was this summer made an honorary member of the FWTAO, by the way, which is quite an honour. She has been very active provincially.

On my left is Norma Wynn. Norma is at present a classroom teacher of a grade 7 class. She has taught every grade from junior kindergarten to grade 8. Last year she served as a curriculum assistant for the junior primary areas. She has been a director for the FWTAO for the past four years provincially.

I am Peggy Dromisky and I am the local president of the Lakehead Women Teachers'. When I am in the classroom working with the children, I am a special education resource teacher.

To begin, we would like to emphasize the need to educate our children to be future leaders, effective problem-solvers and productive members of Canadian society.

To achieve this goal, we must look to the future and prepare our children to be active participants in it. Our educational practices must ensure that our students become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners, enabling them to adapt to constant and mixed change.

The Ministry of Education's philosophy is always quite appropriate and clearly stated. However, we find that sometimes the actions do not necessarily reflect the philosophy. An awful lot of very excellent studies have been produced which do reflect the ministry's philosophy. A very prime example is the early primary education project completed in 1985, but those recommendations in their entirety have not yet been implemented.

The government initiatives in class size, we feel, can be looked at as the first step toward this. We feel it is crucial that measures be taken to ensure that the necessary funding be placed in the right place, which means at the primary level, to make sure it is used for the primary children and also that provision is made that the necessary equipment for child-centred programs at that level are put in place.

Way back in 1975, the federation of women teachers at its annual meeting realized that small

class size was very important if we were going to do a lot of the child-centred learning we feel is appropriate. That policy statement at the bottom of the page pretty well just states the sizes of classes we would like to see in place. As you notice, the primary is at 20, which is what we are heading for, with the government's assistance. We would like to see 15 at junior kindergarten, 18 at senior kindergarten and 25 at the junior and intermediate levels as being good class sizes and workable.

The federation also wanted to have special consideration given to different factors such as physical and learning disabilities, socioeconomic status, language, age of students, cultural background and environmental conditions when determining class size.

We feel there is a need to re-examine our approach to education, based on the growing knowledge we have on how children learn and how they develop, particularly during the elementary school years.

The following, which we are going to present, is really just a brief discussion of some of the changes our members would like to see initiated. We feel that if we are going to prepare our children for life in the 21st century, we have to start acting right now. I am going to turn over the next section, beginning with grade promotion, to Peggy Graham.

Ms. Graham: The women teachers' association considers the lockstep method of promotion contrary to natural child development. When a young child is learning to walk, talk and gain other needed skills, a wide range of times required in skill development is considered normal and acceptable. The youngster is applauded for each gain made as a unique individual, not in competition with or comparison to others. However, when a child enters school, often he or she is expected to develop and function at approximately the same level as every pupil in the class, although his or her ability level and age may vary. In a classroom, a 12-month age difference is not unusual among students.

We must recognize that each child possesses unique learning potentials, needs, learning styles and abilities. Traditionally, the child adapted to the system as opposed to the educational system meeting the needs of the child. Inroads have been made in handling individual differences. The federation believes that besides being inhumane to treat children with a wide range of abilities in exactly the same way, it may also contribute to the complex problems that cause some students to drop out of school in later years. Lockstep

grade promotion is not conducive to allowing a child time to develop systematically at his or her own rate with positive self-concept and love of learning intact.

I would like to mention that this next sentence we have in here was in our first draft. When we were reconsidering it, we decided we did not want to include it. Somehow it got into the final copy. What we were talking about in our initial meeting about it was that in the secondary schools students often can be taking things at various levels. They can be in grade 10 taking grade 11 math and things like that. But there are other factors that are not as flexible, so we had ruled it out. Anyway, it is there, so we were going to take whiteout this morning and white out all your copies.

Madam Chairman: I will just caution members of the jury to ignore that.

Ms. Graham: Thank you. We feel that to avoid the lockstep method of promotion, a nongraded approach over three existing divisions is recommended. Promotion would occur at the end of each division. Clear outcome goals by division would allow for differentials in the development of individual students. We anticipated the divisions would probably be junior kindergarten to grade 3, grades 4 to 6 and grades 7 and 8. That would be primary, junior and intermediate.

We support activity-based programs delivered through an integrated curriculum with an emphasis on the development of language and numerical skills. Continuous observation, supplemented by evaluation on a divisional basis, would provide a better indicator of an individual child's progress and abilities.

This organization allows for continuous progress since children can develop their skills systematically, experiencing daily success without pressure of time. Individual differences and needs can be addressed through flexible grouping for instruction and other activities. Small groups offer opportunities for more interaction and involvement, both among the children and with the teacher.

Ms. Wynn is going to deal with the next section on accountability.

1010

Ms. Wynn: The Lakehead Women Teachers' Association recognizes that the educational system is under increasing pressure for accountability for the services it provides to children. To most people in our community, remembering their own experience in school, this means a form of testing.

To address public expectations, the provincial government stated that it "would establish province-wide benchmarks at the elementary level for languages, math, science and social studies" and "would require school boards to report to parents at regular intervals, such as at the end of grades 3, 6 and 8, telling them how well their children are meeting the province-wide benchmarks."

LWTA is against any formalized testing for children in their primary and junior divisions. Numerous research studies demonstrate the inappropriateness of formal testing procedures as a way to determine a child's progress. The phrase "province-wide benchmarks" implies standardized approaches to evaluation that is totally inconsistent with the ministry's own curriculum guidelines and support documents for primary and junior programs.

Although the recommended provincial benchmark reporting times coincide with our proposed nongraded division promotion times, we would like our own system to develop local benchmarks in languages, math, science and social studies.

LWTA is pleased that the Ministry of Education is exploring the development of "learning profiles". We assume that these would encompass the whole child and would be an outgrowth of The Formative Years and Education in the Primary and Junior Division.

Our local board uses early identification profiles in junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten and grade 1, which are developed by the child's teacher through continuous observation of the child in a variety of activities. Work samples are included in each profile. We endorse the use of early identification profiles in order to identify needs and track achievements of our pupils.

We would like to see these profiles expanded to the junior and intermediate levels, using the teachers' observations of how the children have progressed through their daily work and other ways of evaluating what children are doing.

The profiles at the intermediate level could be effectively used to assist the transition in high school by forming the basis for interface sessions between elementary school and receiving secondary schools. This would encourage the planning of curriculum to meet the needs of our students as they enter high school.

In our nongraded approach, determining a child's placement in the next division would be assisted by results of the system benchmark and achievement levels in the learning profile.

I was a member of the board of directors at the time the following policy was passed in the spring. It is our policy at the Federation of Women Teachers' Association of Ontario that standards be clearly set, that we work towards meeting these standards and that the expectations reflect objectives for the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of the individual child.

We are looking at the whole child. Reporting back to parents is important. It should be clear and concise about what the child is doing. The standardized test is only one of many tools that teachers use to assess individual student progress in the fundamental areas of speaking, listening, reading, writing and problem-solving.

One of the important things is that the federation of women teachers is opposed to the introduction of province-wide standardized testing. Back to Ms. Graham.

Ms. Graham: To initiate our suggested nongraded, divisional approach, we recommend that a school board should be encouraged to consider undertaking it as a pilot project with a small number of schools. Teachers who have sound pedagogical practices and can effectively apply instructional strategies will be required.

Their planning must reflect the incorporation of knowledge of child development and learning theories. Schools in this project would emphasize a child-centred approach to teaching and learning which accepts and respects the skills and abilities that each child brings to the classroom and builds on them. This approach recognizes that all children learn differently and develop at different rates, particularly at the elementary levels.

Mrs. Dromisky is going to deal with the last two sections.

Mrs. Dromisky: We did not do streaming in depth. At the elementary level, we felt that even though we do not stream as they do in high school with the three different levels, if children are placed in inflexible groupings which stay the same year after year and even throughout a whole year, that in a sense is a form of streaming.

In elementary schools, there are many ways by which teachers group their children and organize them for instructional purposes. They group them by ability or level of achievement. That is just one method. They do it in a number of other ways, too, and for other reasons. But we have to be careful and try to eliminate the labelling of learners. We felt once a bluebird, always a bluebird, or once a crow, always a crow. That is how we used to name our reading groups or

groups the children had. That is what we would like to get rid of, the labelling of learners.

The research indicates that students usually perform to the level of our expectations of them. Research also indicates that teachers and parents having high expectations of students is a very positive characteristic in determining school effectiveness.

In conclusion, I would like to say that in our educational system there will always be room for improvement and changes will always have to be made, because our society is not static and neither is our school system, or at least it should not be. Schools must continue to adapt to the changing needs in our society and the individuals they service. Therefore, we have three points we would like to emphasize.

We strongly encourage the ministry to act on recommendations that reflect the existing child-centred philosophy of education, particularly those expressed in the early primary education project.

We recommend a nongraded approach within the three existing elementary divisions, primary, junior and intermediate, with promotion occurring only at the end of each division. This approach would be undertaken initially as a pilot project in a small number of schools within a school board.

We advocate the elimination of streaming at all levels in our educational system.

In closing, we would just like to repeat the caution explained in our provincial organization's presentation at the select committee's earlier hearings. The Federation of Woman Teachers' Associations of Ontario did present twice to you, once in June and once in September, and I took this excerpt out because we thought it was worth repeating:

"It is important to recognize that calls for change are frequently based on memories of earlier days, not necessarily better days. Society has moved a long way in the 20 to 30 years since many of today's parents and teachers, and indeed employers, were in school. So have our schools. Research has helped us toward greater understanding of the complicated social, emotional and cognitive interrelationships that influence the learning process. It would be tragic at this crucial period in history to undertake regressive action in the guise of progress."

Thank you very much for your attention to our presentation.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for a simply excellent presentation. You can tell it is

excellent because we have a pile of members who have indicated they have questions.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I wonder if you can just give me a little bit of basic information about how the system here is working. The early identification project has been going on since just this spring or longer?

Ms. Wynn: It has been going on longer; it was revised this spring—last fall, in fact. Last year was the first year and this is the second year of it. Last year it was junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten, and this year the grade 1 teachers will be involved in the profile and then it will go up to grade 2. We had another early identification project in place before. This is a new one, refined.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Is there a commitment to your recommendation that it not be just under the primary division but that it go on?

Ms. Wynn: The committee is looking at that. It is an expanded one. We have had workshops and in-service for our teachers on observation techniques and the naturalistic approach to evaluating.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But there has been no time to do longitudinal research in terms of the effectiveness.

Mrs. Dromisky: Not yet.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I agree with much of what is in your brief. I probably will not be asking any questions about that, but one of things that struck me about the child-centred learning concept is that the rhetoric for it has gone on a long time within the ministry and within the teaching community. In your view, how many, what percentage of teachers are actually using that model and co-operative learning, community-based learning and those kinds of more modern concepts of education in this location?

Ms. Wynn: More and more are using them all the time. I would say the majority of our primary classrooms are geared to child-centred learning and active learning. Our juniors are coming along in that area and so are our intermediates. It started at the primary, because the JK, SK, and the grade 1 and that whole—key was the age of the child. We are learning that the child has to be active in his own learning in order for it to be good learning.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What is the policy here in terms of the integration of exceptional students? Do you have many withdrawal classes in the elementary panel?

Ms. Wynn: We have some, but they are integrated into regular classrooms within the school in which they are. Those who can be integrated are integrated.

Mrs. Dromisky: We used to withdraw them much more. Now with the new policies coming forward, we have been trying to work with the children right within the classroom setup rather than taking them out into a special room or class.

Ms. Wynn: We have learning disability classes and so forth, and those are integrated into regular classes for the subjects they can handle at that level.

1020

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I had another question I wanted to ask about native kids, but I will leave that to somebody else to go after.

One thing you did not talk about here, which has been talked about elsewhere, is the bridge from elementary to secondary and the role of guidance in that area. We have had some people come before us, saying there is a dearth of money for guidance and recognition of the importance of guidance in the elementary panel. I wonder what your experience is here.

Mrs. Dromisky: We do not have much time there at all. Regular classroom teachers handle the guidance, basically. The only interface that seems to have taken place, where you actually discuss students and what is going to happen to them in high school with teachers from a high school, was pretty well done with special education students going into the high school setup. We have been discussing their progress for quite a long time already, but we would like to see it for all the children.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Many of the ideas that have been brought forward, in terms of the divisional promotions and those kinds of things, have been raised by other groups, as has the importance of early identification. So our theme is developing.

Mr. Miclash: I am interested in what you might have to suggest as far as teacher training goes, the upgrading of teachers to stay with the system in order to implement some of the ideas we have talked about. Do you have any ideas in that area?

Mrs. Dromisky: Are you talking about teacher training provincially or locally?

Mr. Miclash: Both, actually; what is going on locally, for instance?

Mrs. Dromisky: Norma, you did a lot of that last year.

Ms. Wynn: At our school of education there are a lot of courses going on right now on junior methods. Some of them have been cancelled because of lack of interest. The junior and primary methods ones and those kinds of courses are very well subscribed to by our local teachers, to get further services. These are our teachers who came out of the faculties in the three areas, primary, junior and intermediate; not the recent ones. We are always looking for more courses to update teachers; we are always doing it. Our board is very active in in-service, updating teachers and improving it. I think the pre-service level has to be improved as well as the post-service.

Mr. Miclash: When you say "cancelled because of lack of interest," are you saying that some of your teachers are not interested?

Ms. Wynn: It may not be a lack of interest, but maybe the course is not designed to meet their needs. As you know, the primary-junior science, with the new ministry statement on it—we have tried to run that course in the summer and in the winter, but it has not gone yet. I guess the question is why; what is not being offered in the course.

What should be offered in order to get teachers into science, especially in the primary and junior grades, and to get them to recognize that junior kindergarten teachers are teaching science? I think sometimes our teachers do not even know they are doing science, when they really are doing all kinds of science with our children, but we just have not labelled it as science. So maybe we have to ask why they are not taking it and take a look at the way the course is set up and see what can be done to change it, to meet their needs.

Mrs. Dromisky: I think a lot has to be done at the teacher education level, and of course you are looking into that, anyway. The government had a study with recommendations—was it two years ago now? We would like to see a modification in teacher training. Ms. Graham and I sat on a provincial committee and we sit on the local committee for the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

Ms. Graham: I think a term of internship following teachers' college or a year longer of teacher training—

Mrs. Dromisky: To start, at least.

Ms. Graham: —to start. In the time that they have in the faculties now, it is very difficult to cover all they need to do adequately. A term of internship would help.

Mr. Miclash: We have heard of the internship. That was mentioned before. There are some good ideas coming along that way as well.

Mrs. Dromisky: It is the practice in the classroom that is so very important. You can learn a lot by role modelling from practising teachers who are doing their job well.

Madam Chairman: We have both Mr. Adams and Mr. Keyes still on the list. If Mr. Adams promises to be very brief in his questions, we will probably have time for Mr. Keyes to ask questions also.

Mr. Adams: Thank you for those kind words.

It was an excellent brief. You mentioned class sizes of 15, 20, 25. What are your class sizes roughly, at present, in those grade levels?

Ms. Graham: They vary greatly.

Ms. Wynn: As an average, most of ours are based on about 26 or 27 to one. That is an average. Then you get the cases of 35 or 37 in a grade 8 and 16 in a grade 1. You are trying to balance off. We are looking at small sizes in primary, which are necessary, but at the same time, we cannot overload the intermediate or the junior divisions.

Our numbers on average are good, but we have some cases that are really out of whack with numbers. We have the 35s, the 38s, the 33s in grades 1 and 2. We hate working with averages, because they do not always give you the total picture.

Mr. Keyes: With 33, do they compensate with teachers' aides sometimes in grades 1 and 2?

Ms. Wynn: We have what we call school assistants' time that is given to them. They do the nonteaching type of activity, preparing materials and so forth.

Mrs. Dromisky: Which is a help, of course.

Mr. Keyes: I just want to follow up, because I do appreciate many of the recommendations made here. One point is a clarification. I suggest that the government is not trying to set standardized tests across the province when it talks about provincial benchmarks.

Mrs. Dromisky: That is what we are hoping.

Mr. Keyes: I taught for a number of years and I always felt it was great to rate your own school, and students a bit against the Canadian test of basic skills, but I was never convinced that was an Ontario test type of thing.

I think here I see the merits of it in something that, as teachers and school systems, if you want you can look at what has happened from a generalization across the province in these 100 schools in those areas that simply use it as a guideline, to see whether you can say, "Well, there are certainly areas where we seem not to be

doing as much work and achieving the same rate," but not consider it as any standardized testing. I do not think there is any worry there.

Ms. Wynn: Yes, but the other thing is I think then we would have to communicate that to the parents and so forth, because as soon as you say "benchmarks" and "standardized," they automatically hear "provincial testing." You know, "That is a good thing to show us what we are doing and what our kids are doing." So I think, on the other hand, we then have to communicate that better to the public.

Mrs. Dromisky: And to the educators too.

Mr. Keyes: One of the things I would like to see us think about is, when we agree fairly well here on getting away from grade promotion, to do it by division perhaps. Some might even go further than that. How are we going to sell that to society, to the parents and even to the teachers?

Ms. Wynn: I know, even when I began teaching about 20 years ago, one of the bandwagons we were on was nonstandardized. Britain has been able to do it. I think we just need to educate our parents before we start it, while we are doing it and afterwards; because they are used to a lockstep system, that is the way they went through school.

As we said, what happened in the past always seemed better than what can happen, but it is a way we have to educate. I guess it is up to both the province and the local board to determine if that is the route we are going to go with education, which is best for the child, and then to communicate that.

Mrs. Dromisky: That is why we advocated that we start as a pilot project in a small number of schools with an assistant, because it takes a while. Any change, as you well know, takes a long time to put into force, so we are hoping that would show the parents and the community. You could educate them by having this pilot project and seeing how successfully it would work.

Mr. Keyes: Basically, anything from the provincial level is to allow flexibility within boards that want to move in that direction.

Mrs. Dromisky: Yes.

Mr. Keyes: That would be done with the support of teachers, boards, etc.

The only other one was the learning profile. Have you got any examples in your own board where you are using the learning profile? I know there is nothing stopping the boards from going that route. We used to do it in our own board many years ago, starting with the primary level.

Ms. Wynn: They are using it. Our junior and senior kindergarten and our grade 1 this year will be on board with learning profiles. A lot of teachers develop their own learning profiles, which they keep their records on, in evaluating their students.

1030

Mr. Keyes: But you would agree perhaps that is one area where, within your board, there has to be a bit of uniformity in the style of learning profile. There are so many different levels of those learning profiles.

Mrs. Dromisky: That is what we would like to see.

Ms. Wynn: And I think that is the direction in which our board is going.

Mr. Keyes: Finally, I know it was not in there, but you did say that one line crept in that should not have: "The secondary schools are less graded today and have more flexibility." Then your very last line on page 5 said, "We advocate the elimination of streaming at all levels of the educational system." They are great arguments in terms.

I know the one should have been out of there but, on the one hand, you did feel that there is flexibility in the high school. We have been looking more towards the elimination of streaming throughout the system, at least to the end of grade 10. Perhaps in grade 10, when you are preparing for a post-secondary type of education to a greater extent than—

Mrs. Dromisky: That is why we took the line out. We discussed it further and we looked at one small area of the flexibility. Then when we looked at it in more depth, our secretary accidentally put it in.

Mr. Keyes: Would it perhaps be more appropriate that your last line on page 5 should have said "in the elementary schools"? I will put you on the spot.

Mrs. Dromisky: I have been talking to some high school people, interestingly enough, and I think that they would like to see streaming eliminated in grades 9 and 10 but they would like to bring it back in grades 11 and 12. I am just saying that we were looking at this as elementary teachers, so excuse us for that, but we do talk to our secondary colleagues. When we discussed some of these things with them, that is what they felt they would like to see, in effect.

Mr. Keyes: That is the theme we are hearing throughout, and I just wonder if you were trying to say "anywhere in the system," and if maybe

you should modify the bottom of the very last line. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank the Lakehead Women Teachers' Association for your presentation to our committee today. We very much appreciate that contribution.

Mrs. Dromisky: Thank you. It was not as tough as we thought.

Madam Chairman: We are basically nice people.

Mrs. Dromisky: Thank goodness.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You should see us at about four o'clock this afternoon.

Mrs. Dromisky: I am glad we were first then.

Madam Chairman: Due to the fact that Mr. Adams was brief, we are actually running on time this morning. I would like to welcome our next delegation, the Fort William Collegiate Institute Home and School Association. Please come forward.

We have allocated one half-hour for your presentation and, as I mentioned to the previous presenters, if part of that time could be left for members' questions, we would be very appreciative. Please begin whenever you wish, after identifying yourselves for Hansard.

FORT WILLIAM COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Allan: We are very glad to be here this morning to talk to you on this subject. We are members, as you said, of the Fort William Collegiate Institute Home and School Association. On my left is Roberta Hannah. We are very grateful to her this morning for stepping in at short notice. On my right is Frank Pierce, who will be talking on music, as far as semestering is concerned. I am Nonce Allan.

Due to the interest and concern about semestering shown by parents, who had quite a few concerns, we decided, as a group, to make a small study on semestering to try to find answers. We went out and did quite a bit of research. We found that a lot of it was backdated 10 or 11 years. We find it very difficult to come up with up-to-date information on this.

As we continued on this, we found that there were many other groups also studying semestering because of concerns: home and school groups, just various groups throughout Ontario.

Some of the findings of the 1977 report called *The Impact of Semestering on Selected Secondary Schools in Ontario* are listed in the presentation on pages 1 and 2. The results of the report were to encourage nonsemestered schools to

semester as soon as possible; thus the advent of OSIS and the four-year program.

From observation of both systems, several concerns have arisen, bringing into question many of these findings. Some of these concerns and questions were:

1. That music, mathematics and languages other than English, suffer from lack of continuity. A subject may be studied the first semester of one year and not followed until the second semester of the second year, leaving one year there, and in some cases even two.

2. That considerable material will be forgotten because of a possible complete year when the subject is not studied. There are large chunks of material which must be absorbed quickly because of new concepts following with such speed and there is little time to digest the material or for review.

3. That a greater amount of material is missed through absenteeism. As you know, one day in the semestered system is equivalent to two in the traditional system. This was also mentioned in the Ministry of Education report that I mentioned earlier.

4. That teachers in the secondary schools may not be sufficiently prepared to teach in the semestered system. An extended short period is not the answer when using a 76-minute period. Teacher guidance is necessary to maximize use of this longer period, as more material must be covered and the interest of the students has to be kept for the 76-minute period.

Because of the semestered system also, more time is taken up with examinations, as there are now four sets in the year instead of two.

5. That fast-tracking may allow for loss of enrichment in favour of completion of secondary school education as soon as possible. To go through school in the shorter period, extra subjects have been dropped. The student may not have the opportunity again to experience these enriching courses.

Also, a student planning to leave school after four and a half years may lose his or her chance in the final year of being a team member in sports or of taking an active part in school government, thus losing valuable life skills training. They cannot take part in any of those areas where a commitment is necessary for a year, and these are leadership losses both to the younger students and to the senior.

6. That because of fast-tracking, students may be immature for certain material to be studied, as in English.

7. That the required background for some subjects may not have been reached because of fast-tracking, as in physics and chemistry, where a certain level of mathematics is necessary to proceed.

8. That students who complete their secondary school education in January are often writing examinations and registering for college at the same time, which is very difficult when students and chosen colleges are in different communities.

Final examinations take place at the end of January for the first semester, with university courses beginning in February. Students may register during the first week, but this is a big jump from high school to university with no break, and even more so if, as I said, the two institutions are in different communities.

9. That co-ordination of calendars is a problem for students leaving secondary school in January when many prerequisite courses are offered only in September in the universities.

In Lakehead University, for example, on February 1 prerequisite courses are offered in psychology, sociology, political studies, math and English. These are three-month courses. There are no sciences and no professional schools, such as physical education, engineering or business. Some of these are offered in January but not in February.

The three-month courses beginning in February can be taken along with spring and summer courses, but when you look at the major June courses, these are usually four nights a week, with a heavy workload, and this is at a time when students are working at summer jobs. Even so, not all universities do offer courses starting in February. It would be interesting to know the success rate of these students going from high school to university in February.

At this time Mrs. Hannah will give us some idea of the dilemmas faced by students completing high school in January to begin university in February.

Mrs. Hannah: Until recently, I held the position of financial aid administrator of Lakehead University, and it is on the basis of that experience, plus being a parent of a high school student and three children rapidly reaching that stage, that I wish to offer to you my concerns.

As Mrs. Allan mentioned, many Ontario universities offer full and half courses which commence in both the September and January sessions as well as spring and summer. As I am sure you are aware, the majority of high school students apply for university admissions com-

mencing in September. Admission in January is normally impossible for a currently registered semestered grade 13 student, as he or she would have remaining classes and/or exams to write in January. However, it is interesting to note that adaptations can be and have been made to the session schedules and/or the admission requirements of certain universities to accommodate the unique needs of semestered students.

For example, as Mrs. Allan mentioned, Lakehead University has a three-month session which commences in February and allows a student to complete up to two full credits. The course selection, of course, is very limited and does not include courses in the professional programs.

1040

The University of Guelph allows certain students to enter its January session on the basis of their interim marks from their first semester in high school and, of course, not requiring that the students complete their current grade 13 credits and/or exams. Subsequently, these students would not receive their secondary school honours graduation diploma. This does not happen very often, I have been told, but it is a system which allows a student to come without having to wait to the following September.

A concern in all of this is the student's eligibility for academic awards upon entry to university under such atypical conditions. Lakehead University at present has no awards policy regarding first-class students applying to Lakehead for the February session. The university's higher-valued entrance awards—that is, not just the basic scholarship based on first-class standing; all students at Lakehead are eligible for \$500 upon entry with first-class standing, but there are much higher valued awards and those are the ones I am concerned about—are normally awarded on the basis of competition in June of each year, when the large majority of high school students are being offered admission for September of that year.

These students applying for admission in February are betwixt and between. They wish to be considered for the maximum amount of scholarship funds normally available to entering students, but in February the pool of high-ranking entrance students is so small the university cannot automatically award one of its higher-valued awards at that time. A scholarship request from a student and/or a guidance counsellor on behalf of a student is considered only on an individual basis in the case of the higher-valued and normally competitive awards.

I am not saying that the university would not offer one of its higher-valued awards, but it is only on a very individual basis and there is no set policy. The university is at this point trying to deal with this situation, which seems to be increasing every year, of top students finishing in January and wanting to start in February.

The awards officer at Guelph informs me that the semestered high school students entering its January session can wait until June and compete with a larger pool of students applying for admission in September. They are not penalized by any courses or marks that they may have taken in the interim at the university. However, it seems that these students must wait six months after they have commenced their university studies to learn whether they have been awarded a major scholarship.

It appears to our association that not only are the Ontario universities' entry sessions not particularly practical, nor consistent, for the semestered student completing high school in January, but also application of scholarship eligibility criteria and awarding procedure varies across the province.

Our questions are these. First, what is the purpose of a student completing high school in four and a half years if there are few university and college programs he or she may enter in February and, in addition, most scholarship funding is still geared to students starting their studies in September? Second, are the universities adapting their academic and scholarship programs quickly enough to accommodate the special circumstances of semestered students wishing to commence university studies in February? Thank you.

Mrs. Allan: If you would turn to page 5, where "Debunking the Semestering Myth" is quoted, I would like you to remove one word that completely changes the meaning. Where it begins, "Mathematical achievement was, however, clearly greater," would you please remove the word "than"? It should be "greater in." It completely changes that. Thank you.

As we continued to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the semestered system, we came up with more questions than answers to our concerns.

In the OISE studies mentioned on this page, math, biology and chemistry achievement were shown to be greater in nonsemestered classes.

We contacted all high schools within the home and school association. Their replies showed concern that music in particular was suffering because of the semestered system.

At this time I would like Frank Pierce to give some of the concerns in this area.

Mr. Pierce: Upon entering high school, students enrolling in music and parents supporting an arts program would expect that their children would be able to develop their musical skills and talents consistently throughout the year and be actively involved in the music program. As a result of the present organization with the semestered system, students are unable to make a full commitment to orchestra and band because of being able to take music for only half the year. If they do elect to continue in these groups, or the workload from other subject areas permits them to continue, their technique is very poor due to lack of regular instruction and practice. As a result, the standard and quality of music suffers.

To initiate and discuss with administration all aspects of a proposed band-and-orchestra program is next to impossible in the semestered school, as time and space are not always available on a regular basis and it is not always certain that no other school activity will be scheduled at that time. It is impossible to compete with sports activities and other school-related organizations, and students themselves find it difficult to choose a particular area of interest. Most often they feel pressured into situations and are unable to experience the many opportunities that should be available to them throughout the entire year.

Teachers themselves find that after many years of successful teaching they are having to justify their extracurricular activities. Not only is this frustrating for the students, but obviously more so for their instructors. Conducting a band requires a high degree of commitment and dedication. A teacher who is willing to spend time learning by attending workshops, listening and reading, and has a desire to spend extra time with students at lunch, after school and evenings, will find that he or she will have little chance of succeeding when trying to work in a semestered system.

Teachers in any area want only to provide rewarding experiences that will enrich the lives of their students. The extent to which a teacher provides these experiences will determine the quality of the product. Does the semester system meet this objective?

I am sure you would agree that music is a second language which we begin teaching our children when they first enrol in our schools. As with any other language, the standard procedure is to go slowly, step by step, to develop a systematic understanding of all musical elements

and explore the opportunities and phases that are available to them in secondary school. A working knowledge and understanding of music, as well as other core subjects, are required for the teaching and learning of concepts and applying the skills on a practical, day-to-day basis. This is virtually impossible under the present system, as it is a nonflexible system and is insensitive to the needs of our children.

There are many reasons for the existence of a good music program, but the most important one is that music is an expressive and satisfying activity which enhances each child's self-image and it should be available freely to all students throughout the entire year. For many, it may be the most memorable and rewarding experience of their high school years and may lead them to fulfilling musical endeavours in later years.

With music being such an important aspect of our everyday life and a means of universal communication, we hope you would agree that the quality and standard of music in our secondary schools must be maintained and encouraged to flourish.

Mrs. Allan: Marie Pierce, in her article, *Policy and Perception—Recent Developments on Semestering*, also mentioned concerns being shown as to the effect of semestering on the quality of education.

In conclusion, now that more than 450 Ontario high schools have opted for semestering, it is time once more to evaluate this particular system to determine if it has accomplished its aims or if it is just a means for students to fast-track. The fact that the semestered system is popular helps to hide its flaws and its weaknesses. We are not saying that semestering is a good or bad system, but that we owe it to our children to find out the effect of semestering on the quality of education in the secondary schools of Ontario and for solutions to be found to the existing problems if the semestered system is to remain.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mrs. Allan. We always particularly appreciate presentations from parents' groups. In one sense you are at arm's length to the school system, but in another you are seeing the outcomes because your children are in the system. I found it very interesting that many of the concerns you outline here in Thunder Bay are almost identical to what we heard from a north Toronto parent group back in southern Ontario. In fact, many of the conclusions you reached were absolutely identical, so this is obviously not just a problem with semestering in one area of the province.

1050

Mrs. Allan: No. We presented our resolution to the federation in London this year and it was accepted unanimously because there were a lot of similar concerns to our own at that meeting as well.

Madam Chairman: Just before we go to questions from members, do you have any schools in Thunder Bay which are operating on a different timetable so that they have the advantages of semestering without the disadvantages? I will give you an example. Northern Secondary School in my riding has a two-day timetable with longer periods. They have a 76-minute period so that the children are getting the benefit of the longer time but they are taking it only every second day, so that if there is an absence, for instance, it does not affect it to the same extent. Do you have that type of situation here?

Mrs. Hannah: Not that I am aware of.

Mrs. Allan: No. We did go into the time-tabling of the schools we contacted throughout Ontario and found this. But even with one I visited in southern Ontario where the music program was taken every day throughout the year, although it seemed the ideal situation because they had the semestering and the music working alongside, when I spoke to the music teacher there were problems where students who would normally go out to entertain or to go to workshops—and this was part of their music experience—had to come back and try to make up time. It also needed so much co-operation from teachers of other subjects, which was extremely difficult.

Madam Chairman: This situation I am describing was nonsemestered. They were taking the full eight courses, just taking them every second day so that they could use the longer time periods. It seemed to me a good compromise between the two systems.

On the matter of questions from members, we have Mr. Johnston to start and then Mr. Adams.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you very much for the presentation. I think in some ways it must be very difficult just to focus on one issue as a group, but it is very useful for us that you have done that. The concerns about music have been raised now consistently around the province, I think we can say, in Ottawa, Windsor, and certainly in our hearings in Toronto. This is a theme which is coming up a great deal and semestering is often being tied to it, as is OSIS, frankly, in terms of the number of credits that are mandatory for the arts.

I guess I would like to get a better idea of what is actually happening here in Thunder Bay, if I could. When we talk about semestering, we often talk about it as a monolithic approach, a full-year credit for a half-year semester. The vast majority of the schools that are using semestering are using that system but there are others which are using a mix of regular organization plus semestering. There are those that are using a half-year credit for a half-year semester. There are those that are using a trimester kind of approach. I am wondering if you can just give us an idea of what is happening here in Thunder Bay specifically. Do you have schools which are non-semestered as well as those that are semestered? Any practical information would be useful.

Mrs. Allan: My understanding at this time is that they are all on the semester system, where four subjects are taken in the first semester and four in the second, although I know of one school where music is taken during part of the lunch period throughout the year.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That seems to be the majority approach, but this study that was done by the province in 1987 of the way things are done showed a number of other models I could refer you to. Just in case there may be ways of ameliorating this situation by choice—and we are looking at the question of maybe mandating that a choice be available to a student within a board's jurisdiction to take one of a variety of approaches to this—we would ask you to consider that as one of the legislative options we might look at.

Mrs. Allan: Just how flexible this can be also depends on the enrolment in the school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Yes, although it is interesting again to look at the statistics here. I would have presumed fewer small schools would be using the full-credit semester system but in fact the percentage is almost the same as it is in the big schools. I would have thought, as you said, that would have been much more difficult to accomplish.

My other question is around the whole matter of how this interfaces with the universities, as Mr. Jackson would say if he were here. I do not believe I am using that kind of language. At any rate, I am wondering if you can tell me if changing the semester dates—in other words, changing the school year to have the semesters end at a time which is more in lockstep with the way the universities operate theirs—would get away from the problem you were talking about: the difficulty of getting the big prize or bursaries, whatever, going into the post-secondary level. Would that be one way of dealing with that

problem, if we shifted the startup times for the secondary school system so that they fit in more with what is happening at the post-secondary level?

Mrs. Hannah: It sounds like rather a unique answer to the problem, if it is an answer. I am trying to think in my mind of the ramifications of that all the way around. I suppose, at first thought, that could be a possible solution. Are you saying the academic year would still be the same length; that is, you would have basically the two terms, September-December and January-April?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The model I am basing this on is something we received while in Windsor but it was produced by eastern Ontario boards. If I remember this correctly, I think the startup of the fall term was August 15 and the other went from January until May some time. That was the notion they were putting forward.

The reason I am asking the question is that it seems that besides the pedagogical questions you are right to raise around semestering and which need to be investigated more thoroughly than has been done in the few studies which have been done, there is the question that is begged by this about reorganizing the school year. There are many people who are looking at that issue and the length of the school day and the reorganization of the school year as another major question which is very much tied into our notions of the effectiveness of semestering. I was just thinking this might be one means at least of dealing with the post-secondary problem.

Mrs. Hannah: It sounds closer as a solution. The only problem I could possibly see is the interference of working in the summer. The students would have to leave the workforce earlier. Would that cause a problem in the types of jobs they could get? They are in the workforce earlier, from what you are saying, and actually more along the same lines as the university student.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: In direct competition, whereas normally the secondary school student is much disadvantaged in getting a job during the summer, which is something I never thought about.

Mrs. Hannah: I believe the high schools in Fort Frances, Ontario, start into high school earlier in the year. I am trying to think back on that.

Mr. Miclash: Back the third week in August.

Mrs. Hannah: And they are out earlier because they want to get that edge on the job

market in the summer because they find they are disadvantaged, being further from the big cities.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Perhaps we can learn more about that from the member.

Mr. Miclash: I am not the member for Fort Frances.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The member from the northwest part, the outer reaches.

Thank you very much for your comments. Perhaps it is possible for us to send that little paper received from the eastern boards to your association so you can have a look at it as a model, which they do not feel wedded to but it is a means of stirring up some discussion.

Mrs. Hannah: That is interesting on these different models. I am curious now about why certain schools or school boards tend to opt for a certain model. I really never thought of that situation.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is a very idiosyncratic system.

Mr. Keyes: Flexibility is the key word. We have seen the models and everything else on semestering. I suppose we have seen 10 or 12 different models of semestering to compare in the same school, some semestered, some not.

Mrs. Hannah: Have these models been studied as to which ones are more effective?

Mr. Keyes: They have been utilized.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: There are very few studies which have actually been done on semestering, at least according to research that our people have been able to find or any of the deputations that have been before us. There have been very few studies on semestering in terms of the pedagogical effect. There are lots of presumptions.

Mrs. Allan: I do not know what numbers we are looking at, but for students moving within the year, it would make it extremely difficult to move from a nonsemestered to a semestered system or variations in between.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: That is why the choices would have to be available within each board and mandated that that choice would be there. One of the arguments for semestering we heard recently was that in a place like Toronto, where the mobility is so great in terms of people moving back and forth between jurisdictions, in fact it is useful to have a person be able to re-enter quickly because it is on a semester basis rather than have a full year. There is a downside to that too. The arguments have been fascinating all around.

1100

Madam Chairman: We have less than five minutes left and we have Mr. Adams as well as Mr. Dietsch. If you would like to start.

Mr. Adams: I would like to follow up on Mr. Johnston's point from the other end. I refer to the colleges and universities. It is one thing to think of the schools adapting to them, but I was actually a bit shocked by what you said.

I could see that Lakehead has done something. It has actually adjusted and has this special limited program with the problems of awards that you mentioned. But you are saying that even Guelph, which is the only university in the province which has been semestered for many years, has in fact not yet adapted to the date at which the high school student graduates.

Mrs. Hannah: Yes. I contacted the current financial administrator at Lakehead and asked her as a favour to phone Guelph yesterday for me. She spoke with Garry Davidson who is the awards officer there and this is what he explained to her: they do not have a February session but they will allow the students to come in in January.

Mr. Adams: Do you know of any university other than Lakehead which actually has February sessions?

Mrs. Allan: I think York has a heavy program.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: They deal with a lot of their students the same way as Guelph does.

Mr. Adams: I think that is an interesting reflection on the way the college and university system has responded to this substantial change which you document in your brief.

I know you were talking mainly about music, but the brief speaks to science as well. The point was made earlier that semesters often go with longer periods, and that has been suggested as a considerable advantage in science because of the experimental side. Even in mathematics, it has been suggested that math should be taught in a more experimental way. Do you not see some of those advantages in the science education?

Mr. Pierce: Yes, I do. I see it in the science allowing more time for experiments, observations, what have you. However, when you finish a unit in science—you start at point A and you finish. That is it. Your tests are done on the material and certainly some of the things that you learn in science then are used to further your studies in other areas.

But it is entirely different in music, because, initially, you learn skills in music and you build

upon those skills. You never ever complete. You never ever come to an end where you can say, "Hey, we have completed this particular area of our study of music." You are always learning.

The thing is if you have a particular skill and talent and if you do not use it, you are going to lose it. We find that particularly in Fort William Collegiate. Yes, the students are perhaps taking music for the first semester. They attend their classes and then, after that semester, they get so involved in the next four subjects they are taking that their instrument ends up in a corner. Then they do not have time to even go out to band or orchestra and it is lost. Music really has to be a continuing thing, going from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

Madam Chairman: A final question by Mr. Dietsch.

Mr. Dietsch: Mrs. Allan, you obviously have had children in the system who have gone through the semestering.

Mrs. Allan: They are going through it.

Mr. Dietsch: They are in the process of going through the semestering system?

Mrs. Allan: That is right.

Mr. Dietsch: In your opinion, as a parent, do you feel that the semestering system is something that is basically good but needs some modifications done to it? I get the distinct impression from reading your brief that you have some real reservations about the semestering system in total.

Mrs. Allan: There are a lot of excellent points to it. It is very popular with the students. They can take their four subjects. One of their comments was that they do not have so many books to carry; but as well as that, they only study for four examinations at a time. The motivation can really be excellent through that because if you have a subject that you really have a lot of problems with, you do not like or maybe you do not get on with the teacher, you can say, "Well, I'll just stick it out until January and I'm finished." So there is a lot of good in it, but there are very serious flaws in it and these need to be corrected.

Mr. Dietsch: I guess I am trying to be more pointed in terms of your own feelings with regard to improvements to the semestering system as the way we should be going, as opposed to going back to square one and reviewing. That is really what I would like your feedback on.

Mrs. Allan: Possibility the flexibility and timetabling would make quite a difference that we have not had experience with. I really do not

have answers. We just have the concerns that we are looking for answers and we are going out to the other schools and other groups with our concerns to see if they have answers. We just seem to be coming up with more and more concerns. We do not have answers to this.

Mr. Dietsch: Would I be right in assuming that some of the good things that we have in the semestering system we would like to keep?

Mrs. Allan: Oh, yes.

Mr. Dietsch: And some of the areas that we have of concern within the semestering system are areas where we should improve. Would that be a fair assumption?

Mrs. Allan: Definitely.

Mrs. Hannah: It seems that there are certain courses that are very adaptable to semestering and others that just are not. Is there some way that there can be a compromise? I just think offhand of history or English, which probably can fit into the semestering system fairly well. It is a unit of study; it is not like you have to retain that knowledge to the next one so much. Whereas in mathematics, there is the difficulty of leaving it for a year before you get back into it, or French or music. I have trouble struggling with that; I mean those particular subjects.

Mrs. Allan: Yes. French you can even have two years now.

Mrs. Hannah: Yes.

Mrs. Allan: You have your three years and then your OAC, so if you are looking at going to a university like Ottawa where French is required, you cannot afford to take four years in a row and then have that long spell before you have French again.

Mr. Dietsch: As a last point, I would just like to say that as I understand it—and correct me if you understand it differently than I do—in terms of the semestering system, for example if we took mathematics as starting out at one section of the mathematics program and then coming through it and building on the mathematics structure as you come through; I know I have had children go through on the semestering system, and in particular major in math, and they found it very, very useful, having the foundation and then building on the blocks of that foundation to come up with it. So I guess it depends on the individuals within the system; which has something to bear on the earlier presentation, growth at your own rate.

Mrs. Allan: And without the great gaps in between the year. Even for a good student, it is a long time to be without math.

Mr. Villeneuve: The flexibility that students have with the semestering system seems to allow them to adapt very well, and I am very happy with it. I think it has overtones beyond the classroom. It gives them maybe a little bit of flexibility to do part-time jobs. We have the so-called a.m. students in some grades. Could you comment on that? Just how much of a factor is it here in the north? I know certainly in metropolitan areas it is a big factor. Sometimes we are maybe giving the educational system credit for students liking that, but there are more reasons than just what we see in school. Could you comment on that, please?

Mrs. Hannah: Yes. I would think just through the experience of talking with my daughter's friends, so many have part-time jobs, far more than any of us would have had when we went to high school; it is almost the thing to do now. If you do not work part-time, you are wasting your time, and yet they use this very excuse not to participate in school activities.

Then they continue on into university, and I see it over and over again. They enter with the expectation that they will get a part-time job to tide themselves along, and how many times I have told them: "Don't use that as a way of making it through. University is much more difficult than high school." But they seem to feel they can continue right through life like this with that part-time job.

Mr. Villeneuve: I think we have to look beyond the walls of the school and the university because there is more to it than just what we see intramurally.

Mrs. Allan: At the moment, I understand they are going to be looking at the number of hours spent in part-time jobs in the school. The school itself is going to do that.

Mr. Villeneuve: I think that is a very important factor. Thank you.

1110

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Miclash): Our next presentation is by the Northern Ontario School Trustees' Association, along with the Kenora Board of Education, Edna Kidd and Dick Coburn. Hello, Edna. Hello, Dick.

Mrs. Kidd: How are you?

The Acting Chairman: Good, thank you. Before we start, could I get you to identify yourselves for the purposes of Hansard?

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You do not know these people?

The Acting Chairman: Hansard might not. I do. I have to admit Edna was the chairman of the board when I was granted my four-year leave.

Mrs. Kidd: So he has to be nice to us.

The Acting Chairman: That is right.

Interjection: Do you have extra pins?

Mrs. Kidd: Yes, I do. We have lots.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Hold on to them, folks. These are collectors' items now.

Mrs. Kidd: Yes, they are. That is why I brought them. The NOSTA pins you have just received are now collectors' items. NOSTA semi-exists for the moment. Whenever letters patent are received for the new association, NOSTA will no longer be in existence, so I would like you to treasure those pins, please.

The Acting Chairman: If you would like to identify yourselves for the purposes of electronic Hansard, you know you have half an hour. We would like some time at the end for questions if possible, so take as much time as you wish for the presentation and then we will open up for questions after that.

NORTHERN ONTARIO SCHOOL TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION

KENORA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. Kidd: I am Edna Kidd. I am president of the Northern Ontario School Trustees' Association, as well as being chairman of the Kenora Board of Education.

Mr. Coburn: I am Dick Coburn, the director of education for the Kenora Board of Education, which also bestows upon me a few extra titles such as secretary of the board, treasurer of the board, clerk of the unorganized territory and, as well, the assistant returning officer in the fall elections; and I work for Edna.

Mr. Keyes: That is a bad indication right there, that last statement.

Mr. Mahoney: That he works for Edna?

Mrs. Kidd: The previous one.

Mr. Keyes: Returning officer. Tomorrow is the big day.

Mrs. Kidd: Dick carries many titles, but that is what happens in small school boards. We have to sort of stretch our staff considerably.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity this morning. We are interested in expressing our views on the current state of education in Ontario, and particularly the four issues identified by you for your deliberation.

You will notice that our presentation may differ from others you have received. First, this is a joint presentation from the Northern Ontario School Trustees' Association and the Kenora Board of Education. Second, it contains a

number of briefs and responses, which you have received, which have been previously presented to various sections of government and, of course, particularly to the Ministry of Education.

While most of these briefs do not specifically deal with your four topics, we feel that a better overall picture of northern education will be obtained if they are included in this presentation. We also believe it very necessary that we give you, very briefly, our views on the philosophy and fundamental goals of education.

We believe that public education—and I must say this part of the presentation is NOSTA—must provide opportunities for all students to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes for the continuance, development and preservation of Canadian society, while learning also how to apply these to previously unencountered problems. It must be flexible, responsive and adaptive to the specific needs and abilities of the student.

In addition to ensuring competency in core curriculum areas, the public school system must offer a wide variety of programs and instructional strategies which will not only accommodate the different abilities and goals of students, but also recognize the uniqueness of the variety of regions that exist in Ontario.

Northern Ontario, for instance, must have the opportunity to teach subjects, content and skills germane to it specifically, i.e., forestry, outdoor education, mining, etc. There are many partners in public education and those of us responsible must be accountable to all partners.

To discuss the four topics—and this is very general, merely touching on each topic:

OSIS: It is our belief that OSIS recognizes that individual students have different abilities, interests and future directions. The requirement of 16 compulsory credits of the 30 needed for the OAC ensures competency in core curriculum areas, as well as allowing for the diversity of needs. It allows flexibility, not only in course selections and levels but also in the time taken to reach graduation.

Unfortunately, because all students require 30 credits, technological programs are being affected. The 16 compulsory credits do not make it easy for students wishing to enter technological programs; consequently, enrolment in these programs has dropped considerably. Small northern boards believe it is necessary that we offer technological opportunities to those students who are not university-bound and recommend that the ministry examine the impact of OSIS on technological programs.

Semestering: Most northern boards, I think you will find, while spending many long months and even years studying the effects of semestering prior to OSIS, did not actually implement it until the introduction of OSIS.

Semestering has a number of advantages, particularly to small, one-secondary-school systems. It provides flexibility in the time required to acquire 30 credits. It allows midyear adjustments for students with problems in core subjects. It enables students to come back or drop in and is an excellent timetable for co-operative education programming.

However, again, as with all programs, it does have some disadvantages. A student who completes secondary school after the first semester has little opportunity to enter university in the fall. This, however, is changing. I believe one university has made steps to change that. There are also indications that semestering is not conducive to those subjects that require retention of and building on previously learned material, i.e., music, French, typing, etc.

We strongly believe that the choice to semester or not to semester must be a local board decision based on community needs.

Streaming: Since the publishing of the Radwanski report—and I might add the recommendation of which, if implemented, would revert public education back to the 1940s—streaming has come under very close scrutiny at both elementary and secondary levels. At the secondary school level, the number of levels of difficulty has already been reduced through OSIS to three.

We believe that any further reduction would ensure that those who are currently at the basic level, when mixed with the general level, would definitely be assured of failure, while students from the advanced level who were melded with the general level would suffer by the removal of the challenge. Young people need to be able to pursue programs that are meaningful and relevant to them personally. Not all can handle general programs while others require the extra challenge.

1120

At the elementary level, the same thing applies. Students are individuals. They have individual needs and abilities and blessed are they who find a teacher who recognizes those needs and abilities and is able to work with them.

We find it rather ironic that while the ministry is recommending, and indeed enforcing, reduction of class size in the primary grades to enable teachers to teach on a more individualized basis,

recommendations are being made to forget the individual and to teach all children the same things, in the same manner, at the same time. We believe the solution lies in teacher training. They must be able to recognize individual needs and be able to work with them in order that the required skills and knowledge are achieved.

Grade promotion: In the not too distant past, grade promotion was an accepted fact. A student passed or failed. The failure meant repeating the grade. This was discontinued when it was found that this method of promotion did not take into account (a) the student who was good in some subjects, poor in others, (b) the maturity and motivation creativity of the student, and (c) the stigma of failure, and quite a few other factors.

We believe, and again we reiterate, that all students are different. Not all students learn in the same way and at the same time. Some may indeed need to repeat a grade, but on the whole, remediation in special subjects is not only the best educational answer but also the most humane.

I have only touched on these very important topics very briefly and very generally, but now I will ask Mr. Coburn to give you a visual account of what one board in the north is doing to help solve some of these problems.

Mr. Coburn: We will try this as a means by which we can take a look at some of the aspects of education in the Kenora system.

I would like to stress initially that we have a partnership that operates in education, and that happens to include the school, but the school is only one portion of the education process.

In Kenora, we have a different variety of schools. We have our secondary school, but in our northern community we have to remember that it is a single secondary school for the public school board. Second, we have an intermediate school, but we also have independent learning; for example, we have an alternative learning centre. Ladies and gentlemen, our alternative learning centre invited between 200 and 300 adult senior students back into the educational system and in this past year graduated 10 per cent of the entire graduating class of the Beaver Brae Secondary School.

As you can see, each of us has a slightly different perception of who it is with whom we work. To mom and dad, it is their children. To the teacher, it is the pupils, and to the agency, it is the clients. Within the pupils, we even have different types of people as well. Within the Kenora Board of Education, we have a student trustee through the leaders of tomorrow program

who sits as a member of the board and who also was very instrumental—you will notice when you have the opportunity to review the Radwanski report that he had a great number of student-type responses to the suggestions from Mr. Radwanski.

With our parents, we must remember that parents are different this day. We do not just talk about parents; we talk about guardians, crown wards, family and children's services, group homes, foster parents, boarding parents, single parents, separated parents, parents with custody and parents without custody. It presents a different milieu and quite a matrix of a partnership.

Within the community, we have agencies, but we also recognize that business is one of our consumers of our product. There are social services out there. There are recreational services. We try, in all, to work in a partnership with the community. In that partnership, we must also recognize that schools are open and children are in them between five and five and one half hours per day. That means they are in somebody else's care and custody for the other 18 or 19 hours per day.

The logo for the Kenora Board of Education is rather interesting in that it has a number of symbols. You can see that the learning is very evident. If you will happen to notice, ethnoculturalism is reflected there. It is gender neutral and it is traditional, but at the same time it is holistic.

We are quite proud of our operation at the Kenora Board of Education. We look at the kinds of things we are doing with students that reflect upon your request for suggestions and thoughts about philosophy. With philosophy, we take a look at active learning. It actually reflects reality. It is something of which we should be extremely proud. When I say it is reality training, what is it we do on a daily basis when we confront a problem? We use critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making. Active learning with the proper tools and equipment is something that is a viable learning technique as well.

Integrated learning: Learning does not come in a discrete form. It is a process. There is information. There is product. There are skills. You have to mix, match and balance all of that.

I think we have a little bit of a problem with number three there. A copy of these projectuals is in the package that was presented to you earlier. We have a misconception in Ontario that individualization means one to one. There are children who have mixes and matches of groupings and what not that can address their

particular need. Any good elementary program or secondary program involves remediation, enrichment and flexibility. With that, it happens to be permeating our entire system.

As far as reporting goes, reporting is a required form of accountability, to the student as well as to the parents. In order to work together with our partners in education, we involve the parents in the development of those reporting procedures. They are now having to be revised upward at this point to reflect the active learning.

There still is a need to educate parents and the community about the educational process and about the reporting process. We have not done a phenomenally good job on that.

As far as grade promotion is concerned, not all students progress as a nice package. They happen to be different, as they can be found to be different in any one given family. I know that within my family both my children—as the child of my parents, I was certainly different than my brother and my sister. Being very close in age, we each required a different approach to education.

Grade retention, we would believe, in a few rare cases is an advisable thing. Rather than having a child go through the trauma of, "I can no longer swim; I am destined to failure," it would certainly be better on the whole to catch him at an earlier stage. But should some person reflect above on number three, remediation and enrichment are part of a program, so you do not have to employ total retention; you can progress forward into the future with a partial carryover.

Forward to the fundamentals: We know that in the past we have heard of reading, writing and 'rithmetic as the three Rs. But for the future, we need to look at reason, respect and responsibility as the three Rs we look at.

I put down the numeral 2003. That is when a student now entering the junior kindergarten program will be collecting his OAC, which means he will graduate from Confederation College in the year 2006. He will finish his apprenticeship in the year 2008. He will get his BA, if that happens to be the route he or she chooses, in 2007. He will become a new teacher in the year 2008. They will collect their MBA in the year 2009, and their PhD in the year 2011.

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Ladies and gentlemen, you are certainly preparing children for the far distant future, far beyond what we were able to look at in our lives. We need to look at what are the immediate graduates' requirements, what are the near distant graduates' requirements and what are the

far distant graduates' requirements. It is a difficult task.

All I will say about the inner page, on special education, is that special education has worked very well. Unfortunately, it has become paper-intensive. It is a piece of legislation that rather than being people-intensive, ended up in some cases being paper-intensive. We have moved it to very much a people orientation. Rather than having votes and, "This is the decision of what will happen to your child," we work towards consensus with the parents. The parents are involved in the process. They recognize what their rights are, but at the same time they recognize what their responsibility is. Also, there are some procedures which are well tried and available should disagreements happen to occur. It is a costly process, but it definitely gets to the individual student—philosophically, a good idea; fiscally, a costly idea.

Secondary education with OSIS: We can see that within the OSIS situation there has been a great deal of increase in the number of the compulsory subjects. That is a significant increase. It has been around only since 1984-85. We need to give it an opportunity to work. With the choice of those credits that are undertaken, parental guidance is invited, but we recognize that periodically there is some course selection which is done by apathy. We rely very much upon our guidance staff, who will assist in advice, but we also respect the parents' right to make the final decision about their child.

Semestering is seen as being administratively attractive. It permits things such as co-operative education. With a small secondary school, it allows that there be more offerings. It also fits with many of our youths' goals. Those are short term. It is easier to see in a short time span to get a credit. There is very minor cost saving with the textbooks and what not. But teaching strategies must yet change. They are changing, but they must change in order to deal with that longer time span so that we can ensure that we do not just give more of the same for a longer period of time, but that the kinds of things that were suggested by the previous presenters become an actuality.

With the levels of difficulty, what we do need is a sense of pride, because with our basic level—remember, those were students who at the end of grade 10 were issued a terminal certificate and asked to disappear from our education. I did not know it, but I have one at home that I was granted. It is called a terminal certificate.

What we had then were dropouts at the end of grade 10. The basic level has encouraged

students to stay in through grade 12, but with the diplomas and the transcripts that we issue, we must educate the public so that we have honesty in advertising our product.

We have some transitional procedures, but we need some transitional courses that allow greater flexibility and permutations whereby a student may move from one level to another.

As far as streaming at the intermediate level is concerned, we recommend that there be a more solid home room kind of thing for, say, up to 50 per cent of the day. Those students are going through a difficult time in their lives. We think they should have the opportunity to have some attachment. At the senior level, allow those finite choices that they have available to them now.

There is a diagram of what we take a look at within OSIS. Technical education has caused problems. It has accentuated the problems. The shops are currently funded to continue to be effective for 1960 to 1962. The funds have not been available from the federal government for renewal to the level where we could bring our shops into the 1990s, and as we said before, to the year 2000.

There are little anomalies, like the business English that allows you to take care of your tech or business credit, which is an academic credit and therefore helps to decline the number who would approach tech. But tech is a good sense for awareness. It is a practical subject. It is an application of learning from other areas. It is an allowance for career exploration and it is preparation for university. It is marvellous to see those who are going into design and engineering who have taken the draughting courses and built the models in our secondary school.

The academic message that comes through OSIS is one that holds people away from business, tech and the arts. We think there should be a greater emphasis on that. If we take a look, wherever possible there should be combined or shared capital projects that make the best use of the very limited number of dollars that are available for capital grants in our province, such as colleges of applied arts and technology being on the same campus as secondary schools; unique models that you can find in this province of junior kindergarten to CAATs college graduation on the same campus; kindergarten to OAC of Roman Catholic separate school boards and public school secondary schools. We take a look at those as being some of the alternatives that would be available.

In order to apply funding, one of the things we need to recognize is that you need money to do

philosophy. The current ceilings in Ontario for the funding of education are too low. Second, elementary grants need to be increased. There are inherent higher costs in elementary education, but secondary should not be reduced in order to accommodate or shift the money.

Weighting factors in northern Ontario are too low. Why? I can give examples whereby we have costs of transporting goods that normally in southern Ontario would be seven to eight per cent; we can receive the same goods with a freight charge of 30 per cent.

We would appreciate it if the ministry would curtail phase-out funding carrots. By way of example, we have the dropout study; it is going to be gone. Co-op education; there are two teachers right now who will be disappearing as the carrot is removed. That will place an \$80,000-a-year cost to the Kenora Board of Education, which happens to represent the education taxes from 80 above-average ratepayers.

We would appreciate it if there were not changing commitments; I do not know if anybody in Ontario has heard about microcomputers.

There is a thing we have in northwestern Ontario, and we seek your assistance. It is boards working together. It is called Program Council West. Boards share with the ministry and get together, and rather than reinvent the curriculum wheel every year, what we do is work together and share it. To continue, we do need government assistance on a long-term rather than a year-by-year commitment.

As to the capital requests that have been submitted, you are quite well aware, as you cross the province, that they are not enough.

Assessment equalization; it is, in all honesty, very fair. As a result of it, the 80 per cent whopper that could have been effected this year did not happen, thank goodness, because of a phase-in; but something catches our eye a little bit because our grants in Kenora actually did go down three per cent when it was all done. Provincially, I know there was no change, but we did go down.

The funding by proposal, which has been a new approach instituted recently, does cause us some concern because if you want to grab at that ring and that carrot and have it as a service to your children, it takes time, it takes people and we always have to look at the very difficult problem you are faced with: How do we ensure it is fair across the yard?

What we are after, and what we wish you to seek and continue in education, is supporting that

which is good and promoting that which we also appreciate doing with our partners in education. For that, we thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Mrs. Kidd, do you have any further comments before we continue with members' questions?

Mrs. Kidd: No, I am open for questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation. I would like to welcome one of Thunder Bay MPPs who has just arrived, Taras Kozyra. Welcome to our committee. Please feel free to come and join us if you would like; right beside Mr. Micalash. We will keep the northern members together for solidarity.

Mr. Kozyra: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I was just leaving the seaway conference next door, the lifeblood of Thunder Bay.

Mr. Mahoney: Is that you making all the noise in there, Taras?

Interjections.

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Madam Chairman: As usually happens when we have interesting presentations, we are running late. Technically, I think we are almost out of time, but I know we have a number of members who have questions. We will start with Mr. Johnston and go to Mr. Micalash.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is a very wide-ranging brief when you put the two parts together and it is a little awkward then to try to focus on where we want to go with questions, but thank you for the brief.

Reading your response to Radwanski, I am struck by two things. One, I concur with many of the critiques that are taken; but two, I get a sense of a fair acceptance of the status quo, which worries me a little bit as I read that response.

I want to pose some questions around the particularities that northern boards have to face and the effects on organization that we are talking about on your particular school groups, specifically around the effects of semestering on absenteeism and, more important, streaming in terms of some of the social groups in the north.

One of the latest studies done in the city of Toronto showed that native Canadians have a 31 per cent chance of being in a basic or modified course, black Canadians 27 per cent, whereas the average white child in that system had a 13.5 per cent chance of being in those basic or modified courses.

Because there is obviously a fairly large native population in most of the jurisdictions and most of the boards in the north, I wonder if you have done any sociodemographic studies of who goes

into basic stream up here and what the results of those are, if you have done them.

Mr. Coburn: We are unique again because of a new shift in trend as well, which is occurring within northwestern Ontario, and that is that local education authorities of our reserves and bands are establishing their own schools, secondary level. One of the shifts that we are going to see is that we may not know because they will continue their secondary education at home.

We have students from the last graduation of both Beaver Brae and Thomas Aquinas who range the full gamut of graduates from the honours graduate to the ones who are the members of the basic level as well. What we have done in the past is we have tried to have some orientation programs. We have had transitional programs from the home to the town community. They have been disbanded both from the point of view of the students when there was a clustering of students with specific needs like that because the students felt singled out; therefore, the students are throughout the entire system.

In order to support them to be throughout all three levels, we have at both our intermediate school, which involves grade 9, and our secondary school, a native teacher-counsellor on each staff, provided by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. As well, there happens to be a social counsellor on staff in order to assist the assimilation and ensure that they do get into the appropriate academic stream—not sifting down, such as might be suggested in southern Ontario.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: But have you got any statistics? That is my question.

Mr. Coburn: I do not have the statistics with me, no.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Everybody comes to us with the same anecdotal information, not the same in the sense of having any native counsellors, but statistically there does not seem to be much difference when the only studies that are done seem to show that there is an imbalance in who participates in basic stream courses by socioeconomic grouping as well as by certain cultural groupings.

That is a major concern to me if we have a structure that may be reinforcing certain kinds of stereotypes and a lack of social mobility that obviously we would not want in the system. I am frustrated by the fact that none of the boards in the province I have asked this question of has done a study in any systematic way to look at that to see if that kind of grouping has taken place so that policy changes can be undertaken.

Mrs. Kidd: I do not think it is enough just to get statistics. I think you have to check on the previous education of these students: whether or not they were in the public education system, whether or not they came through the native schools, things like that; what opportunities have they had to go beyond the basic level? There would be lot more to the study than just statistics, I would say.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What worries me is that very few people have even done the study. In the Toronto studies that have been done—there have been only three of them that have been done, and only in the city of Toronto; they have not been done in the rest of Metropolitan Toronto even—the statistics seem to indicate that if you are poor, you have approximately the same kind of percentage possibility of going into basic as if you were native. In that case, of course, it is Metis and nonstatus rather than the reserves thing you are raising now in terms of new school systems here.

I am perturbed that there is this presumption that the streaming system is working when nobody has done the socioeconomic study. The only ones that there are worldwide on this all reinforce the fact that streaming seems to structurally assist socioeconomic groupings rather than intellectual and academic groupings and it is of concern to me that those studies have not been done.

Mr. Coburn: I can very much appreciate that it has not been done, but it does not mean that it is not being done. This past June we were in full co-operation with a Dr. Weaver doing a study on that when he came to Kenora. That has since been followed up by the principal researcher, with whom we are co-operating, who is doing the collection of that kind of data from our school system. We will be gleaning a benefit from that research as well.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: The final thing, because I do not want to dominate the questions here, is on absenteeism and semestering. The issue has been raised frequently with us that this can be problematic, that the higher-absentee student has a greater danger of losing a course in the semester system than in a full-year system. Have they done any studies up here in the northwest about the effects that the semestering system, as it is expanding, may be having on that fact?

Mr. Coburn: Having worked in two systems, a nonsemestered system and a semestered system, and in view of the concern level that has now been published in our newspaper in trying to reduce absenteeism, the rate of absenteeism is

exactly the same as at the last high school of which I was in charge.

Mrs. Kidd: We have noticed no difference in Kenora from nonsemester to semester on absenteeism. Absenteeism, unfortunately, is high, but there has been no difference between the two systems.

Mr. Coburn: But it does have a traumatic effect, I agree. When you miss when you have a shorter number of days and what not, that is tough.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It is a concern for several kinds of groupings, in my view, especially the disabled, who may be in and out of hospital situations, for instance.

I will leave all my other questions.

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Mr. Miclash: Thank you, Dick, thank you, Edna, for the great presentation. I really enjoyed it.

There is one program I wanted to ask you about. I actually came across it a couple of weeks ago on a visit to Beaver Brae Secondary School. It had to do with your "come back" program, your dropin program, under Bob Bond. I just wonder if you could expand a little bit on that program that is operating at this time at Beaver Brae.

Mrs. Kidd: I think that is one of the programs that Mr. Coburn was mentioning about the funding being the carrot and then taken away afterwards.

Mr. Coburn: I know you are not here as our straight man; you are here as an unbiased member of the Legislature—

Mr. Miclash: Have you ever seen me any other way?

Interjections.

Madam Chairman: Is this what we call a setup?

Mr. Coburn: No. The member for Kenora (Mr. Miclash) has made a very astute observation, that Bob Bond has developed a program to attract or get back students. There is also a follow-up when there is an indication that "I have got a great job right now." He goes to the community. He goes to the student—or what one could see as the client—and does all kinds of counselling because he has marvellous counselling skills.

That is the good teacher side of him. But he has also had a good program that makes it attractive whereby when they come back they can be involved in co-operative education. They can

still keep their contacts with the world of work. They can be gaining credits while they are it. It does work extremely well.

This is also in conjunction with the alternative learning centre. We have a number of students in the Futures program who are half-time because of the flexibility and the kind of timetable. We have even changed our school year for one school so that it can now operate and provide academic programs during the summer. That way, the student who is in the Futures program can continue to gain credits and not lose touch with the school.

Mr. Miclash: Great. Thank you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: You do not have to necessarily answer now, but could you get us some information about the percentage of students or the numbers of students, whichever, who have dropped tech courses over the period since OSIS has come in so we can have an idea of how that is really working, not just for the Kenora board—I was thinking more of how that is working across the north.

I have not seen that broken out, and it would be interesting to have a look at it. Twenty-six per cent is the figure we have been seeing province-wide—no, sorry, that was an Ottawa figure. I would be very interested to see how it has actually had an impact on the north and whether that has in fact caused the cancellation of courses in any cases or whether it has just made things tighter and financially more difficult for the local boards.

Mrs. Kidd: It would be interesting. We will try to get those figures, etc., for you.

Mr. Coburn: We will do that. There is also a group in Ontario, the technical education and occupations teachers, who most definitely would have that. But when I take a look at our one secondary school, I look at an empty occupation shop, I look at an empty woodworking shop and I look at an empty electronic shop—as well as a very worried electric teacher because the numbers are dropping—whereas I do see exciting, expanding programs in draughting, because that is a good pre-university, pre-engineering program.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would be very interested to get that on this regional basis.

Mr. Coburn: We could do that.

Madam Chairman: We would certainly appreciate it if you could forward that information to our committee via the clerk, and we will

make sure that all members are given a copy of it.

Mrs. Kidd: Good. We will get it to you.

Madam Chairman: You just happen to have with you a videotape.

Mr. Coburn: Which there was no intention to show at this time. But some time at your leisure you may wish to enjoy a six-minute, 41-second videotape entitled *A Year in the Life of Beaver Brae*. It is what education is about from the perspective of the students of Beaver Brae; they made it. I think that you might enjoy it. Not knowing, because in northern Ontario we are beta format and you are quite often VHS, we brought both formats for you.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: All these cultural differences.

Interjection.

Mr. Coburn: There is a brief summary of the bullet points of my presentation that have been shared.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. You have actually hit on the ideal time span for a member, which is six minutes and 41 seconds; so we congratulate you on that.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: It depends on the caucus.

Interjection.

Madam Chairman: That is the peak of our attention span. Thank you very much for your presentation for today.

Mrs. Kidd: Thank you very much for having us.

Madam Chairman: Our final presentation this morning will be by the Lakehead Board of Education. Welcome to our committee. We are pleased to have you before us today. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation time, and as I have mentioned to the other presenters, if you could leave a portion of that for questions from the members, we would be very appreciative. Please begin whenever you wish and just identify yourselves for the purpose of electronic Hansard. I note there are four of you—you see my numeracy skills are very sharp this morning—and three microphones; so when you are addressing the microphone, if you could make sure it is fairly close to you, we would appreciate it.

LAKEHEAD BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. Johnson: Thank you very much. I would just like to introduce myself, Rebecca Johnson, as chairman of the Lakehead Board of Education. With me this morning I have William Everitt, superintendent of curriculum and human

resources for our board; Susan Kennedy, elementary school principal, and Dave Fredrickson, secondary school principal of our system.

I just would like to thank you for the opportunity to come and make our presentation this morning. Welcome to Thunder Bay. It is very important that committees, whether they be the select committee on education or another committee in the provincial government, come to Thunder Bay. We are recognized as a very important part of the province. I just put that in as a plug but also to say thank you very much for coming.

Our board, the Lakehead Board of Education, with an enrolment of approximately 18,000 students, has addressed its presentation to the four issues that you have requested of us. When the position is put forward to you, I assume that you will understand that not all of our staff have had an opportunity to recognize it or to have been able to debate it among themselves. I would also like you to realize that when it came to the board table this past week for endorsement, there was not an opportunity for the trustees themselves to respond to this staff-developed brief, but the majority of the trustees approved it by majority vote and present it to you this morning.

I would like to call on our superintendent of curriculum and human resources, William Everitt, to start our presentation.

Mr. Everitt: Thank you very much. I am pleased to be with you this morning. In our submission, in addition to addressing the four specific areas that you have identified—those of promotion, semestering, streaming and OSIS—we have also made comments on the issues of process learning and the spiral curriculum. From our comments in our brief, we have brought forward 11 recommendations. Perhaps that is where you would like to have most of your opportunity to discuss with us.

The preamble in our brief is based on the goals of education of the province and also the goals of the Lakehead Board of Education as they have been enunciated over the last number of years.

The first issue that we wish to address is the debate over content and process. We believe that there is more to education than the acquisition of measurable content outcomes, that learning is developmental and that there are many influences on a child's readiness and ability to learn, including the child's background, age and physical and intellectual development.

We, as a board, are committed to a child-centred philosophy of education. We support the move to a more balanced emphasis of process

and content in the primary and junior division. We certainly commend the province in the production of such documents as *Science Is Happening Here*; that is giving us some direction of that re-established balance.

We support the concept of the spiral curriculum, as we feel that it more truly reflects the developmental nature of learning.

In the area of promotion, we are concerned about the limitations inherent in a strict adherence to grade promotion. The structure of secondary schools with credits accommodates progression where students are successful. At the elementary level, we see real advantages in the possibility of divisional promotion, where particularly capable students could move through the division in less than the normal period of time, and those who are experiencing difficulty would be able to take a somewhat longer period. The end result would be students entering the next division, certainly with a more consistent background in meeting the objectives of the particular division.

Like many others, we are concerned about the effect that too-early streaming has on students' future potential. At the elementary level, while we support the concept of grouping, we recognize that if grouping means only ability grouping, there are some very serious problems. We see grouping for a variety of educational reasons that would be addressing specific learning objectives. At the secondary level, we encourage a thorough examination of alternatives to the current practice of streaming at grade 9-10.

Semestering is a common organizational practice that has many positive features, but there are also a number of weaknesses in current practices. We encourage the ministry to play a lead role in examining semestering, encouraging innovative practices and in providing information to schools and school boards.

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With respect to OSIS, we again see many positive features. However, we are concerned about the restrictions placed on schools and students by requiring that courses be offered at particular levels of difficulty. There are concerns about the philosophy at the intermediate division where the ministry encourages integration but, through the structure of the curriculum guidelines, requires schools to look very closely at discipline in organizing on a discipline basis.

We have concerns about what we consider to be an overcrowded curriculum in the grades 7 and 8 curricula. We recognize the real concern about the interpretation of the secondary school

diploma and the need to have a better understanding of the diploma and the value of the student transcript.

With respect to the recommendations that appear at the back of the brief, there are 11. We have made a number of recommendations. Fundamental to these is our recommendation that the ministry base any future changes in Ontario education on a child-centred philosophy and on sound theory and research on adolescent and child development.

We certainly recommend that early childhood education be a priority of the province, that semestering be examined more thoroughly, that the practice of streaming be examined, that the definition of a secondary credit be redefined, that appropriate other changes in diploma requirements be made to accommodate this, that a concerted effort be made to educate the public on the meaning of a secondary school diploma and the importance of the student transcript and that boards be allowed and encouraged to experiment with some of the practices around streaming, promotion and semestering prior to any firm policy decisions being made.

With those comments, we would be pleased to respond to questions and enter into some discussion with you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. We appreciate the fact that you did allow lots of time for members' questions. We will start off with Mr. Adams. I am not even going to ask him to be brief this time because he has been so good this morning.

Mr. Adams: I do appreciate this opportunity. You mentioned socioeconomic problems which contribute to early learning difficulties. In your board, does that significantly include native students?

Mr. Everitt: Yes, although we do not have a large native population in the school board.

Mr. Adams: What sort of percentage do you have?

Mr. Everitt: I do not have an actual number on that. In our secondary program, we have approximately 200 to 300 students out of a population of 7,000. I guess that is less than five per cent.

Mr. Adams: With regard to our topics, do you see that group, small though it is, as having special needs? Would there be comments you would have on their needs under these themes?

Mr. Everitt: Yes. Dave, with your background you might want to make some comments with respect to some of the things we have

attempted to do in addressing those particular needs.

Mr. Fredrickson: My comments about that group might be repeated about other groups. What I observed as the principal of a vocational school for about five years was a real disproportion in terms of the number of native students, for example, who were attending that program. That program was predominantly basic and at some time modified.

The number of students who would be in that school and in an additional secondary school, which again had the largest basic-level program outside of the vocational schools, would have been about, I would estimate, 80 to 90 per cent of the native population attending those two schools. So obviously there was a very real disproportion in terms of the way native students attended our programs.

It was not something we were deliberately doing. It was something that was happening as a result of a lot of other factors. Based on that, I would say there is a very real need to address the way in which the native population from northwestern Ontario leaves its elementary program and then enters the secondary program. We have begun to address that. The facts that I was citing are no longer the case. But I believe there was a very real need to address that.

Mr. Everitt: Susan Kennedy, who teaches in one of our core schools, may also want to make some comments.

Mrs. Kennedy: I have an elementary school of about 250 children and about 30 per cent are native. I would say we have the highest percentage in elementary schools in Thunder Bay. Of those 30 per cent, I would say about 80 per cent turn over from the period of September to March of one year. We have over 80 per cent of those children come into our school and leave again at some time during the school year.

I see two different groups of native children come to our schools. With those who come from the reserve directly, we find we are looking at grade levels a couple of years behind and very much needing language development. At the early primary years when they enter our school, we find we really have to put a lot of resources into helping these young native children who come from a different cultural background and try to get them to fit into our school. We have real needs in terms of helping our native children at the elementary school level.

Mr. Adams: If you feel this is an inappropriate question, feel free not to answer it. I asked a question the other day about Metis students; the

reply very quickly got into "What is the definition of a Metis?" What I was trying to get at was a student who is very clearly between the two cultures, and your point about the reserve would be one way of identifying that. Do you find here that Metis students defined in that way have particular needs? As I say, if you feel you cannot identify such a group, just say so.

Mr. Fredrickson: I do not think we can identify a Metis group.

Mr. Adams: Okay.

Mr. Everitt: I would say that in the Thunder Bay area that is not a terminology that is used to any degree.

Mr. Adams: That is why I tried to explain it, but it does seem to me that native students are increasingly being served in the province; not enough, by any means, but their problems of self-identity and so on are being recognized. It does seem to me that mainstream students are being served but that there is perhaps a group in between which is not. You do not think so?

Mr. Everitt: I do not think we are in a position to respond to that without really looking at it closely. I would comment, though, following up some of the earlier discussions at this table, some of the comments Mr. Johnston has made here and in other places about the needs of other students, the students coming from poor families, that some of those are issues as well, and when we look at serving any particular group, I think we have to look at that broader base.

Mr. Villeneuve: Ladies and gentlemen from the Lakehead board, thank you for your presentation. We had a presentation made by a couple of students yesterday. They identified that there should be more local information, local curricula stuff based on what is happening in your immediate area, such as the Lakehead, Kenora and northern Ontario. I come from eastern Ontario and we sometimes have the same problems: we are neither fish nor fowl.

I notice you have not identified things specific to your board or region of the province. Do you feel this committee should be addressing something at the ministry level that would be oriented towards the north, the Lakehead, Kenora, your general area of the province, such as natural resources and what have you, oriented possibly to keeping our better students here rather than preparing them to go to Toronto or to the world?

Mr. Everitt: I would make a couple of comments with respect to that, and others may want to respond as well. It is my feeling that within the existing curriculum guidelines there is

a fair amount of flexibility for local initiative in program development. We find in many of our primary and junior education programs, the local area is a feature. The same would be true in the secondary guidelines that are coming forward at the present time.

The two examples I would use are geography, which has the opportunity for some local components included in it, and in the science guidelines, where there is the opportunity for some local units which would be developed, perhaps based on the pulp and paper industry and things that pertain to us. I would think a board that wishes to incorporate that certainly should be encouraged to incorporate that and have those opportunities.

I do not see that type of policy direction as necessary. With respect to keeping local students here, I think the people in the Lakehead are very supportive of Lakehead University and a number of the initiatives in that regard to expand the program opportunities there that will encourage more students to stay locally.

Mr. Villeneuve: You feel this committee need not address that particular area, your flexibility and your ability to adapt to the local area without any additional thrust—

Mr. Everitt: As long as you take that into account when you do your provincial sampling for testing; when you do test, you test on the things that are common, not those that are different.

Mr. Fredrickson: I believe that essentially what Mr. Everitt has said is true. At the same time, in some subject areas, where we are restricted by textbook—I am speaking now in the professional sense as teachers, where we restrict ourselves to textbook—that could become a problem. The kind of professional development and in-service we do to make it possible for teachers to break away from the textbook, to do more resource-based instruction, is really critical to our being able to do that. To whatever extent that kind of approach to teacher development can be supported at the provincial level, I believe we can do a more effective job of, let's say, promoting the north and dealing with the north.

1210

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the brief, as winter descends on the Valhalla. I do not know what is going on out there in the northern half of northwestern Ontario. If this is some sort of reality therapy for us southerners, I get the message: do something about it.

Interjection.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I am not fully equipped, that is true. But people have said that for many other reasons.

I want to thank you very much. I think it is a splendid brief and I like the coherence of your recommendations very much. One of my concerns, as you may have gathered from the past, has been that we have such an emphasis on our goals of education—just to come back to what our first hearings were all about—on self-actualization, that we have not looked at broader social goals and putting those within the framework of education.

The matter you raise about addressing the socioeconomic realities is something which has, I think, often been disguised by our look at individualization and not saying you have to look at that within the context of social groupings of various sorts. I am very pleased about your talking about that.

Mr. Adams raised a number of the other matters I wanted to raise so I am going to move on to a couple of other things you dealt with.

One which I thought was fascinating was about how OSIS was supposed to make a coherent intermediate level—grades 7, 8, 9 and 10—yet what we are seeing is a real dichotomy of approaches to education within that grouping. I wonder if you would like to expand on that a little more in terms of your views of the problem and how we might go about changing that; maybe also put it in the context of, if you would, a little of the overload of curriculum at grades 7 and 8 that you mention and, if possible, also within the terms of guidance for the transition, because I am struck by the fact that the only guidance requirement in the elementary panel is 20 hours spread over 7 and 8.

The more I think about that, the more I think it is quite arbitrary and very bizarre. I would like to have your thoughts about how that might be changed as part of our notion of making grades 7 through 10 a more coherent pedagogical package.

Mr. Everitt: I am not sure whether one of the other people would like to jump on that one. You may note that the recommendations we made were quite broad rather than very specific. We have identified some issues and have not provided solutions. We did that intentionally, because we do see there are broad issues that are there and we do not have a lot of answers; we have some major concerns.

With the intermediate division, schools have organized in different ways across the province.

Certainly, if you look across North America, you will find a variety of different kinds of organizational structures. It seems to be unfortunate that we are trying within the philosophy of OSIS to talk about integrating in the intermediate division, continuing the progression from the junior into the intermediate so that the children will work together, yet we have guidelines that are very subject-specific and we put time allocations to those subjects and it complicates it.

It almost gives one in the schools the feeling that we have to break it down and in grade 7 and 8 go on a rotary system to match what happens in the high school. As a board, we have made a strong commitment to move away from formal rotary systems. As a result, in this particular board, we do not have intermediate elementary schools at the grades 7 and 8 level. That is a real challenge, then, for the classroom teacher who is going to deal with all of the subject areas or most of the subject areas.

I think Mr. Fredrickson, as a secondary school principal, will probably be able to make some more comments about trying to deal with the grouping of children in the early years of high school and the difficulty in the structures of doing that. So we can say yes, we think children should be together more, in more homogeneous groupings, as far as taking more than one subject together or class together at the high school level is concerned, and perhaps looking at experimenting with integrating some of the histories or geographies so that you do not have the number of different teachers that are involved.

I do not believe we have done any major experimentation in that area. We certainly see that as a major issue. Without answering your question, Mr. Johnston, I think all I am really doing is reinforcing the questions that you asked.

Mr. Fredrickson: I share the concern and I sure do not have the answers, but I think that kids in the intermediate division become victims of a number of things. Let me say structure for lack of a better catch-all. It seems to me that as long as we have a curriculum that is developed almost in two different systems, although we try very hard to work elementary and secondary people together in that area, it is difficult to do. We require that students go from a day where their time is organized in one fashion to a day where their time is very rigidly struck at 76 minutes. There are all kinds of things that we put in the way there. I think our success in dealing with the curriculum at the intermediate level, will be directly proportional to our ability as professionals to deal with all of those things that get in the way of

setting it up more effectively for them. It is not just a curriculum problem. It is more of a structural problem.

Mr. Everitt: I would also like to go back to a couple of the other questions you raised.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: One of the things I would like us to remember—it has not been highlighted much, but has been alluded to a lot in your answer—is the whole question of moving from the one-teacher-based approach, or a few teachers, to the teacher-by-subject right across and trying to make that bridge a little easier for kids to adjust to. Perhaps this is something we should be thinking of as well when we talk about that switch to streaming or nonstreaming at that level.

Mr. Everitt: When we look at children in that intermediate division in grades 7 and 8, another issue that we have as a group of professionals, would be that there is a lot of new curriculum content that comes in those new guidelines; and as we understand adolescent growth development, there are also years where, rather than being at a spurt level, they tend to be at a plateau level, so we are trying to move from a little more process to much more content at a time when content may be very difficult for children to grasp. That is a component of what we call the overloaded curriculum. Guidance is definitely a very important issue. I am not sure how effectively school systems across this province have dealt with it at the intermediate division.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: I would think it probably needs a separate review all by itself at this stage. The last comment I am making is to see if I have understood accurately what you are saying about the period lengths. One suggestion is this move to 60-minute periods because of the length involved. Is it easier to deal with for other reasons, including pedagogical reasons? Are you suggesting that we move specifically to that kind of model or that there has to be much more flexibility in terms of how we organize the number of hours expected for certain courses—but that the rigidity of OSIS, for instance, is inappropriate for a number of reasons—and should we have a spread of that? Or do you think it should be moved to the 60-minute period? I was not really clear where you wanted to go on that.

Mr. Fredrickson: Actually it is much more complex than just moving to a 60-minute period. The way we are structured, whether we are semestered or nonsemestered, is based on the number of hours of instruction required for a

credit. That really forces us into the multiple of the 40-minute period, and that is where we come to the 76-minute period. It was never really intended to be that. It was simply a result of the definition, in the Education Act, of what a credit was.

1220

The primary benefits are pedagogical. A 60-minute period provides for, I guess, a more appropriate amount of time across the curriculum than a 76-minute period does where the attention span becomes a problem, let's say, for academic subjects and yet it is a better kind of time span for physical education or for shop programs. I think a lot of educators would agree 60 minutes is a better time span to bridge a lot of those gaps.

What it requires right up front is a redefinition of what a credit is. It would not work simply to say: now we are going to go to 60-minute periods because then we get into the kind of situation one of our local high schools was in where they were offering a 0.83 of a credit and, of course, that had to be abolished because it did not fit the ministry definition. We are saying change the definition so that we can be more creative with our schools around a 60-minute period.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: And the definition should not be hour-based, is that what you are saying? Or what should the definition for credit be then?

Mr. Everitt: I would take the position that the number of hours per credit certainly needs some criteria and I would support the definition of credit being the number of hours that a 60-minute period would accommodate. As Dave has said, there is a lot of flexibility within that definition as to: "Do you operate by semester, half semester, or in other ways? How do you structure your day?" Also you have probably heard many groups that you have been meeting over the last number of months talk about, "We should be making this mandatory," because these are good programs and everybody has a good rationale. But for the redefinition of the credit a number of those other kind of things can fit into it. So we have pedagogical, we have structural, we also have by course. I think for those reasons we would put that specific recommendation in and we would debate it. Our other recommendations are all general in nature. That one tends to have a more specific nature to it.

Madam Chairman: A final question from Taras Kozyra.

Mr. Kozyra: Thank you, Madam Chairman, for the opportunity. The question is somewhat

tangential to the presentation and I did not rehearse this with this committee. It concerns the Summer School of Science, and for the benefit of the committee because you may not have had this presented before, it is a summer school course of six weeks offered both at Lakehead University and at Laurentian in Sudbury. It involves what you might call the cream of the crop of the students, 60 from the region who are enticed to the program partly by the stimulation of the educational challenge and partly by the \$1,500 that they are paid at the conclusion of the course so they do not lose out in summer employment. It has been offered here in conjunction with the boards of education from the region and Lakehead University. Now, why I asked this it is in the process, though it is funded by the ministry of Northern Development, of sunset review. I would ask him to comment on whether this type of program should be continued or allowed to die as it might.

Mr. Keyes: Are you sure this is not rehearsed?

Madam Chairman: Sounds like another setup to me.

Mr. Kozyra: There is a supplementary.

Mr. Everitt: Sitting on the steering committee of that particular program I have a considerable amount of ownership in what is being done. We have seen it as being very positive as far as introducing young people to university; introducing them to a level of science and technology that they would not normally be able to come in contact with; introducing them at a reasonably early age to the opportunity to meet with other young people from other parts of northern Ontario and recognize the value of northern Ontario; and introducing them to a university in the north that they can see has some advantages to them. So, it is an enrichment program and all those other things that I have identified, I would hope that there would a continuation of them.

Mr. Kozyra: If it works in the north and if it works in sciences, why not extend it throughout Ontario, and through the arts and the social sciences and so on. If it is an excellent concept that should be continued, other than money considerations that are always there, but -

Mr. Everitt: We, I would believe, as a board would fully support that and we would be more than pleased to initiate discussions with the ministries in the area particularly of the arts for this region.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What a vicious attack on Chris Ward.

Mr. Adams: Madam Chairman, as a supplementary, what ages are these students?

Mr. Everitt: The students are 16 or they can be basically 18. They are really in grade 11 and grade 12, returning to secondary school.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: And how many women?

Mr. Everitt: Half. Actually, there was a quota that was put on, but the breakout of applications has really been 50-50.

Interjections.

Mr. Fredrickson: I would like to make an observation that I hope all of our recommendations imply a concern for those students who do not become the highest achievers, that we have kids who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, they come with probably equal potential and equal intelligence but for a lot of reasons, by the time they leave high school they are not there. Although I am absolutely supportive of the summer school Taras is talking about and of any programs that really help kids to strive for that sort of excellence, I think we also need to find ways like that to be more encouraging for the kids who do not quite make it at that level.

My earlier comment about being able to make a similar comment about a number of groups when I responded to the question about native Canadians, I would say on behalf of all of those kids who do not have that high academic orientation that this school attracts.

Madam Chairman: We are really pleased to hear that or I should not speak for the committee, but I certainly am personally—

Interjections.

Madam Chairman: But I really commend you on that initiative. We have heard various people come before us and say there is going to be a real shortage of teachers in the science, math, technical and French immersion courses. I am wondering if perhaps you have not just provided part of the answer. You are stimulating children to be involved in science at an early age. Perhaps they will be our science teachers of the future. I am also really delighted that you have taken into account that the academic side is not the only consideration and that children from lower socio-economic backgrounds are being encouraged to develop their potential. So, that is very pleasant to see.

I would like to very much thank the Lakehead Board of Education for its contribution to our committee today.

Mrs. Johnson: Madam Chairman, just before we conclude, Bill has one comment and I would

like to conclude with one other statement, please.

Madam Chairman: Certainly.

Mr. Everitt: In an earlier presentation, you were questioning what universities offer February admissions. The Council of Ontario Universities Admission Centre at Guelph does produce a list of that. The University of Windsor has a reasonable number of courses that are available. York University, Toronto Erindale campus provides that.

Mr. Mahoney: It is Mississauga Erindale.

Mr. Everitt: Mississauga Erindale campus of the University of Toronto.

Madam Chairman: Of the University of Toronto?

Mr. Everitt: And Lake—

Mr. Mahoney: Mississauga West to be specific.

Madam Chairman: Of the University of Toronto, Mr. Mahoney?

Mr. Mahoney: Of the University of Toronto.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Everitt: That is just not Mississauga Road, I am sure. And Lakehead University, of course.

Madam Chairman: As a Toronto member, I had to clarify that.

Mr. Everitt: And in discussing with the people from universities, they are certainly aware of the increasing number of students coming out and some have been quicker to respond. Our expectation would be that more will respond to that particular need.

Mrs. Johnson: Just as you proceed to your lunch, here is something for you to digest. I like a little bit of philosophy at the end of our recommendations.

The fact that as the largest school system in this part of the province, a system that cares about its staff and of course about its students who are our future citizens, I just would like you, as you proceed in your deliberations to make recommendations to the ministry, to remember that change is a constant in our society and in our world and that education will and must change to address the changing community and the environment in which we live.

I would like to just caution you that change in education must not be the political will of the moment, that you have an opportunity, ladies and gentlemen, to take what is good in education in our province and improve on that.

I want you all to remember that we are educating students who are the future of our

province and of course, the citizens of our world who will be graduating in the 21st century. It is a different world that you and I grew up in. It is a different world that we live in today, so I ask you to make sure that you take the students of our future and make sure that their education is the best our province can provide.

Thank you from the Lakehead Board of Education.

Madam Chairman: Well, thank you very much. I must say that all the presentations this morning have been absolutely marvellous. They have been so focused. We found this also in Sudbury. So, I think it has something to do with the northern Ontario down-to-earth sense of proportion and you really tell it like it is.

Mrs. Johnson: Not quite. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Just before the members go, I do have a couple of messages. First of all, I wanted to thank the Northern Ontario School Trustees' Association for its pins. We are all very proudly wearing them. We understand they may even be a collector's item at some early date and thank you very much for that.

Second, for the members' information, the clerk has checked out all the members. However, you must take your—

Mr. R. F. Johnston: What did she find?

Mr. Mahoney: I did not notice anything.

Madam Chairman: I am sorry. I cannot put that on Hansard, that would be unparliamentary language.

Mr. R. F. Johnston: Half of us are on steroids.

Mr. Mahoney: And the other half should be.

Madam Chairman: I can hardly wait to see you by the end of the day if you are like this by noon.

Please take your key back to reception by one o'clock today. We have retained room 226 which is Mike Dietsch's room for any of the members who are staying for the later flight this evening, if you would like to put your luggage in there. And make sure you mention it to Mike if you plan to do so.

For the members taking the earlier flight, I would suggest you bring your luggage back to this room since we may be leaving in a hurry.

I would also like to mention that members are going to have a much longer lunch hour than we originally planned on. The two o'clock presentation was cancelled yesterday afternoon and the two-thirty one unfortunately will not be able to make it because of difficulties in travel. So, at three o'clock sharp this afternoon we will convene in this room for the afternoon's presentation.

The select committee on education stands adjourned until three o'clock this afternoon.

The committee recessed at 12:32 p.m.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 3 p.m.

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to open up this afternoon's session of the select committee on education. Our first presenter this afternoon is a student, Sean Cuthbert.

Welcome to our committee. We are really pleased that you came before us today. One thing I think all members wish is that we had more student representation, so we are particularly delighted that you could join us and give us your viewpoint. Please start whenever you wish. We have allocated 30 minutes for your presentation, which does include time for members' questions, I hope. If you could just officially identify yourself for the purpose of electronic Hansard.

SEAN CUTHBERT

Mr. Cuthbert: Thanks to the select committee for choosing me for this presentation. I am Sean Cuthbert out of Kenora, Ontario, for those of you who have not met me yet. I attend Beaver Brae Secondary School at the present moment. I am in my fourth year of high school, grade 13, as I am labelled throughout the high school. It is my last year, my Ontario academic course year.

Originally, I was born in Ingersoll, Ontario, near London, and lived there for the better part of my childhood years until my mother got a promotion through Ontario Hydro and moved up to Kenora. I followed her. I have lived in Kenora for about six and a half to seven years now. Before I moved to Kenora, I was raised on my grandpa's dairy farm, where I learned how to milk the cows and throw hay bales and such like that.

After I moved to Kenora I had a hard time fitting into the social areas of Kenora because I was an easterner, as I was labelled, and northerners do not like easterners very much; but after seven years, I fitted in pretty well. Through those seven years, I have completed many courses through the school, I guess you would call them, and correspondence courses. I completed five of them in my high school years on my own time through the learning enrichment service provided in Beaver Brae.

I am now working on getting another correspondence course through the University of Toronto. It is another mathematics correspondence course, which they provide for you on your own time. Presently, I am majoring in science, math and architecture in high school.

I am involved in the community through high school ringette associations, where I am a ringette referee and play hockey with the associations, and I am involved in hockey timekeeping and such. I am also involved in swimming and cycling clubs and I used to be a member of the Young Leaders Tomorrow program, which is an Ontario-funded program. I used to be a member of that until I had to resign because of timetabling difficulties, which I am experiencing already, unfortunately. I used to be on the Kenora Board of Education, actually, for this Young Leaders Tomorrow program and I had to resign from it. That was unfortunate.

However, during the summer, when I have my summer holidays, I try to participate in as many triathlons as time will permit—running, cycling races and such. I also have a full-time job during the summer with a plumbing contractor in the Kenora area. He is a very good contractor; he has plenty of jobs, very high dollar contract jobs. I have learned through this plumbing contractor practical applications of what I have learned in high school years, such as engineering, surveying, plumbing and heating and other things.

I have travelled as much as my bank account permits through the years. I am sure all of you can relate to this. I have travelled to such places as Hawaii, Australia, North Bay, Sudbury, Toronto—I have been to Toronto a couple of times—and the east and west coasts.

I participated in extracurricular activities as much as my timetable will allow again, and I play high school hockey. I have played high school hockey for two years now; I am hoping to make it three this year. I played with the high school soccer association and also intramural sports.

The three topics that I was given to deal with are what I would say are not very important to me, because I do not deal with them very often in the school since, being a student, you do not worry as much about these things as, say, the director of education would; so I am going to deal with these as much as I can. I will deal with them and I hope I will have some input into them.

Grade promotion, to me, is almost obsolete in the high school level now. Because of semestering, you can take any grade level of a subject that you wish to take; no more is there any certain grade level that you are at. Last year you used to get put into a grade level home room, but they even did away with that this year. You follow any grade level or course that you wish to take, such

as a grade 12 science, followed by a grade 11 English, followed by a grade 10 math.

As an example, when I was in grade 8, I was very bored with the subjects I was taking and I used to cause quite a bit of trouble in class. I was one of those little troublemakers in the back of the room. My vice-principal at that time did not know what to do with me. He asked my mother what was going on, whether I was having problems at home or whatever, and she said, "Well, maybe he's bored." His jaw dropped to the ground, and he said, "I never thought of that." He put me into a grade 9 math program when I was still in grade 8 and let me do this on my own time, and it worked out very well. All my time was taken up pretty well. I sort of straightened around after that. That was my first look at grade promotion in that sense, because I was in grade 8 and I was taking the grade 9 math program.

When I entered grade 9—this was still in intermediate school—I took a grade 10 math program, and it just kept going from there, in grade 10 and grade 11. Actually, there was no grade 11 for me; I took all grade 12s in my 11th year. But some students who are capable of being promoted into a higher grade do not wish to do this. They are sort of underachievers who have no ambition to be in a higher grade than where they are. You are sort of in a catch-22 situation. You are undecided whether to pull them up or to keep them at the grade level where they are right now.

My solution to this problem is that if you do not want to put them into a higher grade level than they are in right now, give them a learning enrichment service where, on their time, they can take any kind of subject they are interested in which is not usually taught in the school system or in the school curriculum.

Dealing with the learning enrichment service, this is my third year of being involved with it now. I was IPRCed last year and given the IQ test and everything like that. I will not mention my IQ, because it is not something to brag about, but they did have a meeting about me and they gave me the gifted-student status. I was told that that would give me the power to tell any teacher to give me a special program if I so desired. Well, it did not quite work out that way.

I found that a couple of teachers did not accept this idea very much. They would not work with me and they would not work for me. I eventually lost interest and I dropped the whole idea of it. I am still labelled as a gifted student, but I just have not used it, because it is not worth my time and

effort. Some teachers just will not do anything for you.

However, I tried to ask a teacher to do something for me. She would not do it, so I gave up the whole idea and I pursued enrichment service. Enrichment has given me subjects that the school does not teach any more. I have taken Euclidean geometry, analytical geometry. I have taken a Latin language course. Those have helped my deductive thinking processes, my logical thinking processes incredibly. It has just enriched my whole school outlook.

1510

To go on to deal with the new diploma system now, some of the stuff is not on the copy that you have. I put these in on my own time afterwards because I just got back from Australia three weeks ago. I did not have much time to prepare for this before I had to hand it in.

The 16 compulsory subjects you have to take are a good idea. They give the students a view of what the whole school idea is about. It makes them take history, geography and the maths. It makes them realize that, if they were not interested in it before, they might be interested in it now. It opens new logical-thinking and deductive-thinking channels in their brains. Even if they will never use that information again, they will still have those skills of thinking and deductive reasoning when the time comes that they have to use these types of thinking processes.

Even so, the 16 compulsories have almost been taken to an extreme where you have what a lot of students label as boring subjects. For example, having to take five English courses is very hard on a student who has no ability in English. If a student is struggling to graduate and cannot get these English courses, he or she will eventually give up on trying to get a diploma because he just cannot, because he does not have the diploma requirements. Eventually the student will leave school and will not return, and he will be labelled as a dropout and put on as a statistic.

Unfortunately, that is the case for a great number of students I have known. My sister is one. She dropped out four years ago because she did not like the classes that were being taught and the way they were being taught. That was a traumatic time for her, and she is still trying to struggle to get back on her feet again four years down the road.

Another thing the students do because of this new diploma system is to fast-track through school, which is taking just compulsories and your 14 options and just getting through as fast as

you can in the four-year time period of high school. Unfortunately, fast-tracking leads to students' missing out on a lot of good programs that are offered in the school that the new diploma does not give them enough time to take, because they have taken all these other compulsory subjects and they do not wish to spend the time to take those, and because they are already sick of school by the time they have taken these 16 compulsories. Those are some bones I have to pick with the diploma system itself.

I will now move on to streaming in the schools. Streaming, again, is not dealt with by the student body. A lot of students do not even think about streaming any more; it is just second nature what level they are put at and what level they choose to go to. Streaming, I feel, is usually done by the teachers from grades 1 to 8, and then in high school you get to choose which level you wish to learn at in what subject.

Unfortunately, there are cons to streaming. An advanced-level student, let's say, will look down upon a basic-level student, just brushing him aside and saying: "Hey, look, you are dumb. Leave me alone." Unfortunately, that happens quite often. You see social groups developing in high schools in which the advanced students stay together, the generals stay together and the basics stay together. That is the case. I have seen cases like that many times in Beaver Brae. Unfortunately, kids get left out from learning social skills that they should be able to learn.

But streaming has its pros. One pro of streaming is the students. When they need a more challenging environment, they can get this through streaming by putting them with other students of the same intellectual ability. By putting them in the same environment as these other students, there is sort of a competitive nature between the other students to see who can get the highest marks, who can do as well on the tests and such like that.

Eliminating streaming altogether would just create more problems than you are trying to fix because, by eliminating streaming, you are putting all the students in one classroom and assuming that they learn at the same rates, which is impossible to assume, because everybody is different. The teacher would just pull his or her hair out continuously all year because of the frustrations that would be created by having such a classroom setting.

Semestering in the schools: When I wrote this up, I could not think of any cons to semestering, but I finally thought of one after I got back from my trip and I had missed the first week of school.

It took me two weeks to catch up. I finally caught up just a couple of days ago.

It is just incredible how much work they go through in a one-week period. A friend who sits beside me in school missed two days last week and two days this week. She gets maybe three hours of sleep a night just trying to catch up on all the work that she has missed. I am fortunate because the work I missed today I did yesterday.

I have done a phenomenal amount of work since I missed that first week of school. I used to get four hours' sleep a night, on average, usually. It was not a fun time. Some miss school because of work or because they have no control over missing school. They come back and they just find that they cannot catch up any more. Eventually they just drop the whole year right there. They cannot catch up. They give up on the whole idea of trying to get back in the class and write the test and so on. That is unfortunate in itself.

Now some of the pros of semestering: It gives you longer class time to work. Usually the teacher will give you a half hour or longer to do the work that you are assigned that day. Usually you can get it done in that period. If you can, it just means less homework that night, which sounds really good to a lot of students. Having only four subjects a day, a student does not have as much homework again that night.

It is easier on a student having only four subjects because his or her mind does not have to think of so many subjects in one day. Taking eight subjects a day was hard on a student when you had to think: "What kind of homework am I going to take home tonight? Let's see. I have history, I have geography. Oh, yes, that is right, English. I have a little bit of math. I forgot my math book in the locker. I will have to wait until tomorrow."

1520

It is hard on a student to take eight subjects a day, especially in 40-minute periods, where you usually do not get any work done, you get lectured at for the whole 40 minutes, you are given your assignment before you leave and then you have to do it that night. It takes a long time and a lot of work to work through a whole year, taking eight subjects a day.

Having to take only four subjects for half a year is easy on a person—fairly easy—and during that first semester, the student will tend to get bored with a subject by the time January rolls around. Then all of a sudden the exams are written and he moves into a new class. It gives the student a little bit more enthusiasm for what is

ahead and what classes are ahead and gives him a reason to stick around to see what is around the next corner.

Those are the three subjects that were given to me to deal with, but I feel, as a student, that there is more to the education system than the subjects that were given to me. I am going to deal with the routine teachers, the routine classroom.

Madam Chairman: Sean, I just thought I should mention that we have less than 10 minutes left in the presentation time and I do have a list of members who have questions. If it is all right with you, what I am going to suggest is that members can read your written comments on the routine and some of the other matters like the small business ownership and entrepreneurial courses, and then we could go directly to questions. Is that all right with you?

Mr. Cuthbert: No problem.

Mr. Miclash: Sean, you mentioned the dropping of the compulsory subjects for a number of people who are just not suited. You mentioned English for one. We are getting it from both ends. Other people, such as the employers, are saying that students are coming out of high school with a diploma and no skills. They are suggesting that we are giving them this piece of paper and they cannot read or write or do any calculations or whatever, something that they would expect after that many credits in school.

I know a lot of people have gone through frustration. You mentioned your sister. I know of a number of students who are in that situation. What are some things you could maybe suggest for a student who would be in that situation, where he or she is bored, frustrated, and the compulsory credits are getting him down to a point where he gives up? What are some of your suggestions?

Mr. Cuthbert: I would suggest that a student who is at this frustration point could go to a teacher personally and talk about his or her problems and try to ask the teacher for suggestions as to what the student could do. The teacher might suggest dropping down to a lower level of English teaching or whatever, a lower level of learning, or to take another subject that would be classified as an English subject. Let's say that instead of taking Shakespearean English, you could take business English. That is what a lot of students opt for, to take another different type of subject that is in the same category as what is classified as compulsory; some suggestions along that line. The first thing I would suggest to the student is to go to a teacher, the principal or a

guidance counsellor and talk about the problems and how to work them out in that way.

Mr. Adams: Could I have a supplementary to that?

Madam Chairman: As long as it is brief, Mr. Adams.

Mr. Adams: It is brief. The next question is, how do you cope with a boring course? To some extent I think you have explained it to us, but you must have taken and passed boring courses.

Mr. Cuthbert: Yes.

Mr. Adams: You say one way would be to get it enriched and so on, but do you actually gear down and say, "Look, I have to pass this boring course," and you just do it, do the things you have to do?

Mr. Cuthbert: Yes.

Mr. Adams: Or, if I might say, can you only do well in it if in fact it is enriched?

Mr. Cuthbert: I do not exactly gear down. I go in and usually do the bare minimum of work, just to get through the day type of deal. That is why I take enrichment and stuff like that. It gives me a chance or another way of looking at the subject through enrichment and it gives me enthusiasm for what lies down the road ahead.

Mr. Adams: But you still slug through the boring stuff. You are doing this stuff, and that just keeps you going so you get through this.

Mr. Cuthbert: Yes, you can; you still slug through it. That is what is good about semesters. You can look down the road and say, "Hey, I'm in December now; I've only got till January," instead of saying, "Oh, man, I've still got to go to June with this stuff." That is an incentive in the semestering program, when you are looking down the road until January instead of looking all the way to June. Then you just live through that day and try to get through the week, then through the month and then to the end of semester.

Mr. Adams: Thank you.

Interjection: We have days like that, too. Don't feel bad.

Mr. Villeneuve: Thank you very much for coming to the committee and bringing a very personal outlook. I think you were fortunate to have a background from a dairy farm. You learned by doing. You get to know because of the fact that you are thrown into a situation and you learn very quickly at a young age. Those are things that people who employ those such as yourself quite often want to know, "Can this guy really do this?" If you have learned it in a book, you may have the theory, but the practicality is

very important and I think you have touched on it.

You have made such a strong case for semestering. Why less homework, less pressure, longer lunch hours, etc.? Could you explain that to one who is not that familiar with the semestering system?

Mr. Cuthbert: You see, teachers—I like to throw jokes on them—do not like to work very hard.

Mr. Villeneuve: That is not necessarily a joke.

Mr. Cuthbert: Teachers do not like to work very hard and they do not like to talk very long, especially at the high school level, the secondary level. They just like to lecture for 20 minutes—unless, of course, you get an English teacher. They like to lecture for maybe 20 minutes at a time and then they give you the work and let you go to it.

In the semester system, where you have a 76-minute period and that 20 minutes or half-hour has already gone by, you still have 45 minutes to do your work. If you use that time wisely enough, you can get a phenomenal amount of work done. If you still have work at the end, there is so little that you spend maybe only 15 minutes a night at home with it. Therefore, you can do other things after school instead of having to do homework all the time.

That semester system itself makes it easier on a person. You do not have to travel around from class to class as much. You do not have to pack up and take with you all these books that you have to carry. I talked to one teacher who said he has a lot of qualms about the semester system, but others just love it because they see maybe only two classes a day. As I say, teachers do not like to work, so they just love having these other two classes off to mark tests or whatever. Then they do not have to take any work home either.

That is my biggest point. The stuff that is taught in class does not take the whole period, usually. Then you have the time at the end to do all your work. It makes it all that much easier because once the teacher has taught that lesson, it is still fresh in your mind, so you can do the work much faster and much more easily instead of having to struggle through it after you have forgotten it all when you get home.

Mr. Villeneuve: So you feel that once you have set your mind to a particular subject or a number of things involved in that subject, it is easier to do it over a long period of time than to be fed in more bits and pieces over a—

Mr. Cuthbert: That is right, yes.

Mr. Villeneuve: Do you feel, as one who may have had experience in the regular or nonsemestered system, that as much knowledge can be conveyed, maybe more knowledge can be conveyed, in the semestered system as opposed to the other system?

Mr. Cuthbert: Yes. More knowledge can be conveyed because you get more time during your class to ask questions that come up during the homework, and the teacher can give you extra stuff that he would not have time for in a regular system. The only drawback to having semester systems where you take certain courses for longer periods of time is that the prerequisites sometimes are not scheduled back to back, semesters 1 and 2. I could take, say, grade 12 math and I want to take an OAC math. Sometimes they are scheduled semester 1 in one year and semester 2 in the following year. It is hard to get into it after that almost one-year break from it.

But students seem to be able to fit in fairly nicely, because it is already drilled into their brains what the last class was like and they can pick it up fairly easily once they get into it again. That is really not as much of a problem for most students. For some it is a problem, but for most it is not.

1530

Mr. Villeneuve: You are quite obviously a gifted student, and you have admitted to us that having missed only a week at the beginning of the course, the catching-up period was most difficult for you. Would you suggest that for an average student, having missed that much time at the beginning of a semester might mean that he would have lost the semester or would have had to go to other things?

Mr. Cuthbert: The student probably would have gone to other things, because, as I say, it is very hard to catch up once you have missed that week. The first week, especially, is very crucial because you go over the review from last year very fast. You miss almost two chapters of whatever you are dealing with in that time frame, and a lot of review notes, review exercises and such.

If they have missed the first week, a lot of average students will go into a class one day and they will say: "Oh, wow, no way. I'm out of here. See you later." They will go to the guidance office and drop it right there and pick up another subject which they know they will be able to fit in nicely. I know that the one young lady I was

talking about who sits beside me has missed four days in two weeks and she is struggling right now, trying to catch up.

Mr. Villeneuve: That is a pretty big drawback with what happens in the day-to-day world. I am real pleased that you were able to outline that, as one who has lived it very recently.

Mr. Dietsch: Are you a dairy farmer, by chance?

Mr. Villeneuve: Where do you think I got my education?

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Sean, not only for missing a day of school after you worked so hard to catch up, but just for giving us that fresh perspective from a student's vantage point.

Mr. Cuthbert: No problem. It has been a pleasure. Don't worry about it.

Madam Chairman: Our next presentation will be from the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. I gather it is a joint presentation by the northwestern branch and also the Learning Disabilities Association of Thunder Bay. Could you come forward, please.

Good afternoon. Welcome to our committee. We understand that because you have given us two fairly comprehensive briefs, you are going to highlight each one so that we will have time for members' questions. We have allocated 30 minutes, total, for both the oral presentation time and the members' questions, so please begin whenever you like and start by introducing yourselves for the purpose of Hansard.

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO (NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO)

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF THUNDER BAY

Mrs. Tothill: I am Janet Tothill, liaison officer for the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario for northwestern Ontario.

Mrs. Averill: I am Margaret Averill. I am the tutor for the adult learning-disabled students for the association in Thunder Bay. It may not be the best of things to start off with an apology to you this afternoon, but I would like to make an apology for the typing errors that were in my brief. I was unable to carry out my responsibility for proofreading, owing to a disability I have. But the teacher in me has to come to the surface and I use negative approaches to find out positive answers.

We had a typist who was typing under great haste and pressure and trying to get these 25

copies run off for me. I do not have easy access to doing these things. This is what can happen to any of us if we get overtired or are under great pressure.

Madam Chairman: We know the feeling very well, so no apology is necessary.

Mrs. Averill: I would like to point out that with a good night's rest, that typist's learning disability that showed up would go, whereas a learning-disabled person lives with that all her life. It never goes away.

Therefore, that is why I am taking a rather negative approach to you today. I am looking at the educational system through the eyes of these young men and ladies who come to me for help. It is not until one becomes disabled oneself that one can understand the vulnerability of these people, and forgive me if I am a little harsh, but they are at the disadvantage of sometimes being at the mercy of bureaucrats and systems and do not have the ability to stand up for themselves.

I am taking point (b) as my first point. I am a little disturbed by the overemphasis on administration. This is where these young learning-disabled people get tangled up. They cannot cope with it and very often administration does not understand, so they get battered from one place to another.

Then I would like to look at the overemphasis on the positive; that is point (a). One is frequently provided with evidence through the press on the overemphasis on the positive. We have just had that locally in our press about the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education report on our board. The students who talked to me about it brought me the clipping. I rely on them a lot because I want to know what they are thinking and what they are seeing.

They said that it did not seem to be a very fair report because it showed all the positives but no negatives. Therefore, it was not balanced. A balanced report, to us, would be where we are looking at the positives, are pleased with them, are shown where they are taking us, but the negatives are not swept under the carpet. They must be attended to because from those negatives we can learn an awful lot. In particular, the young men I am dealing with, some of whom are 30 and 32, felt they would never have a chance, nor would the young people coming up, unless this were looked at: what the negatives were that could pull down the positives.

I presume you have probably seen Quality of Education and City Praise, a survey conducted by OISE.

Then there is a report out on the board's presentation to you. They looked through that and again they saw the positives, all the good things that can come out of education. We are not denying that. I think the education system of Ontario has an awful lot of positives going for it. I think there is an awful lot of good there, if it is not destroyed and lost.

Again, they pointed out that there is an awful lot of jargon there, and dreams, but not down to reality: How are we handling this? How are we going to bring it into reality? There is a great deal of book-learning, but the transfer from that book-learning and that knowledge into the actual reality of handling the student's individual needs and adjusting that knowledge is not being carried out. That is why our learning-disabled students are what I call falling between the cracks. We are seeing that every day.

I am seeing the pain of these young people. One of the boys who is coming to me now has said to me: "You know, I'll never be able to marry because I'll never be able to hold a position in life where I'm going to earn enough money to bring up my children so they never have to be on welfare. I have to take a job that is below the standard of what I could do, but my disability is preventing me from doing it."

They are very good workers, hard workers and loyal, but this is one of the realities they face.

That is all I would like to say about that particular section.

1540

We were very concerned in section B about the bureaucracy taking over trustees' positions. We saw this on a news report on television. Trustees are voted in by us to represent us: the taxpayers, the parents and the community. The administration is hired by the trustees to advise them and guide them in areas that they do not have expertise in.

I do not want to see again, nor do many people who have talked to me want to see, a director of education chastising a trustee for asking a question on accountability. We have to be accountable for the money we spend and the work we do for the young people in our care. I do not like to see that. Many taxpayers in this city were very disturbed by that. I think that has to be addressed and looked at.

To me, the administration is there to advise, not to chastise. As for that trustee, I do not care whether I approve of what they say or do, whether I like them or not. But I will defend their right to ask questions about the accountability of

money spent or things done in our classrooms. I think that has to be looked at.

I also am a little disturbed by one case that was brought to me. I do not usually look after children who are in school, because I feel that millions of dollars have been spent on that. That is the education system's duty. But when a little nine-year-old is excluded or expelled from school because he cannot be handled and is brought to me, I do not have the heart to say no.

So we had a case that was brought before us. The parents felt he was placed in the wrong placement. The committee meeting that was called was loaded against the parents from the start. I was horrified by the bureaucrats' approach to those parents. Those parents are in the driver's seat. It is through their tax money that those people are hired.

We are not living in Nazi Germany. We are living in a free Canada, where parents should be heard. A little nine-year-old was nearly destroyed. He had been placed in a class for the emotionally disturbed. That nine-year-old had a severe visual learning disability, was very hyperactive and had a spatial problem. There was too much activity in that classroom. He could not deal with it, so he became violent.

They called him emotionally disturbed. He was placed in the wrong place. But when the parents appealed against this, they were made to feel they had no rights whatsoever. That must be addressed because this is where we are going to erode the good work that we do.

In another case of a little girl whom I was asked to work with, the same thing happened. But this time I was attacked. They attacked the wrong person. I had lived too long, seen too many things to be really disturbed by two administrators who had not done their homework. The news media came in. The Ombudsman came in. The Ontario Human Rights Commission came in. They fought until finally some people with compassion in their hearts looked properly at that case.

Again, I was horrified at the administration's determination to be all-powerful. I think we have to address the point that the parent, student and teacher are the three whom we protect and support and help or you will not get your education. There has to be a relationship there. The administration should be supporting, not suppressing. This is what we saw. I am talking again and I will remind you over and over again that I am talking from a learning-disabled point of view.

I am also a little disturbed by the family compact that we get in smaller areas. It is not what you know but whom you know. That must be looked into too. It is a danger to the disabled.

I would like to look at point E on lipservice being paid to education. Special programs: I have seen programs come and go. As you can see, I am a little old lady now. I have seen many of them come and go. That is wrong. There has to be stability there. There is much good in all that we do, but we have to be eclectic. We are not dealing with little nuts and bolts going through on a conveyor belt; we are dealing with human beings, all unique and different in their way. We have to have an eclectic approach. We have to have many methods, many techniques, and know which of those methods or techniques or materials that particular student or child needs. That can be done.

Again, we have to have teachers. They must be supported. No one should come in and say, as I had said to me once, "You do not do that now," and take material off the desk and throw it in the wastepaper basket. That has to be looked at too.

I am asking why, and so are my students, we get an article, a very well written article that tells parents: "Leave the teaching to the experts. Do not do this, that and the other." I was talking to a gentleman in the city the other day who said to me: "If I had done that, my child would have been lost. I had to pay \$700 a month for a tutor to get him through public school because they would not admit he had a learning disability." Now that he has fortunately gone to one of the high schools in this city that has a good name for recognizing these problems and is helping that young man, he is doing very well, thank you. He is very, very bright, and a learning disability was preventing him from expressing his thoughts and ideas.

Many ideas are given by experts to parents, but they do not qualify them. They do not say, "This may be a good method for your child, for certain children." With a learning-disabled child, you have to have structure, structure and more structure. They must feel safe within a structure so they can learn. This article says that you should not drill words, you should not do phonics, you should not do this, that and the other. The learning-disabled child needs that to hold onto. Many of them cannot associate sound to symbol and are confused. So that statement should be qualified.

I think we are going to have to address ourselves to that. When we make statements, we qualify them. We do not frighten a whole

population into believing that this expert is right. No expert is right. We are too diverse. We are too different.

Madam Chairman: Mrs. Averill, you have made a lot of very good points to date, and I am certainly finding it interesting. I just wanted to let you know that there is less than 15 minutes left in the time. I know your colleague has comments as well, so I did not know if you perhaps wanted to highlight a few of your remaining points.

Mrs. Averill: I would just like to go into the distorted communication. There is much, much more I have to talk to, but that can be left maybe to the questioning.

I used to talk about distorted communication. I have three young men, some of them very, very severely learning-disabled, who have had the courage to apply for—now, I may not be using the latest term—correspondence courses. All three of them got up enough courage to write a very nice letter to their tutor pointing out the problems they needed help with and said, "I am a learning-disabled student."

1550

This is what I feel is dishonest: The first one was ignored. It came through because the boy has a very severe spatial problem and to teach him cubic measurement is pretty difficult. So he did not do well on the paper and was asked to do it again. The boy said, "I need more time," and explained why. The letter was ignored and the message came back, "You do this right away as I have asked you to do."

The second one wrote a very nice letter because the tutor had written a nice letter introducing herself, and he got back a paper that said, "Thank you very much for your nice letter"—it is all here, so I will not bother to read it to you; it would take too much time—and there was a funny little face drawn on it. It said, "Hi." That is the reply he got. The other one was totally ignored.

Now, the honest thing would have been to say: "I do not understand learning disabilities. I would like to know more about them so that I can help you."

That is just one point; I have many more on that dishonesty. But I will stop now, as you have warned me that the time is running out. Sorry, Janet, if I took some of your time.

Mrs. Tothill: That is quite all right. Would members like to question on this now while it is fresh?

Madam Chairman: Perhaps we might wait until the total presentation time. I want to make sure that you get all your points out.

Mrs. Averill: Here is the "Hi." That is to a 26-year-old man in reply to a serious letter.

Madam Chairman: Mrs. Tothill, do you want to address your points first?

Mrs. Tothill: All right. I will just be very quick, because you have all gone through this. I have taken only two statements out of the recommendations made by the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. I would concur with all their recommendations, but there were a couple here that I think, for northwestern Ontario, are something.

Recommendation 25 is on page 1. One of the problems, when you send information out to parents, is that you forget about the little moot points—telephone numbers, addresses, things like that. When you are living in an isolated community of a couple of hundred people and you are trying to think: "Toronto, first of all, where is it?"—you see, they were educated in Ontario, so they are not too sure where Toronto is—"Oh, yes, that is that big place down there. Where do I get the postal code?" We do not have a library for research, so any material coming out should think about people who live in those kinds of communities. So that is quickly on that one.

Oh, boy, that bureaucratic system: Wow. We would not even be here today, I guess, if we did not have that one to kick around. But it is difficult in the isolated areas, there is no question about that. It is tough enough in the city, but it is really rough out there, where your communications are spasmodic to start with.

The one good thing out of the whole of poor old Bill 82 and everything that happened thereafter was the establishment of the special education advisory committee. It held great promise in its original days. I know I was on our board and in to Toronto every six weeks battling about Bill 82, and this whole thing, which has become known as SEAC, seemed to be the one vehicle where parents could have input in a nicer way, in a closer way, to the administration.

Unfortunately, the word "advisory" got mixed up, and it turned out that in many cases the administration was doing all the advising. So the members who represented the various citizenry were just sitting there saying, "Ha, ha, yes, right," or whatever, and then spending the next day pulling the whole thing apart and not able to get the information back in again.

We have been four years into this SEAC. We have learned a lot in four years. The first three were pretty well down the drain, with everybody trying to figure out what to do with this thing. But anyway, it has been working long enough. It is

time now to refine some of it so that we make that piece of mechanism really productive.

Thinking in terms of how some boards have to move around up in this part of the country, how often do they get into whatever community it is where they can talk? I get this on the phone, and I say, "Have you approached your SEAC member?" They say: "SEAC? What the hell is that? Who is that?" Okay, so we have a little problem there.

Now, of course, let's go for the biggie. We tried to do the things that were not going to cost you too much money, so that made you like us better. Now we get to the one where you will never speak to us again—that is, a demonstration school. Trillium School has worked out extremely well. It went through a lot of growing pains, but I think they have it on track now, from everything I have heard so far. But there are not enough spaces there for the children we have up north. It took years for us even to get a kid from the north down there. There were so many needy people in southern Ontario who were closer—you know, that whole thing.

Up here we need it, and one of the reasons is the environment. Environment is getting kicked around a lot these days, so I am not going to go into the importance of that environment, but I have put down the reasons we really should, and one of the things, thinking in terms of finance, is a composite. Do not think just in terms of a Trillium for the learning-disabled, but for the blind, the deaf, maybe the talented and so on. Surely to goodness, we could staff that. The other thing is that it would attract more specialists into this area. We are lacking; we really are. We do not have quick access to some information or training areas and so on. This would be great. It would serve an awful lot of purposes, and I think it would be money well spent.

The rest of it is all down on paper here. If your eyes are not too tired, you have likely gone through all of that.

Let me say about northwestern Ontario that it is a unique part of the country. You think differently: "It's slow up here." Did you ever notice? "Hey, we have a traffic jam. It's going to take you 10 minutes to get to the supermarket," sort of thing. Things are slower, and anything designed should not have to be designed at a fast pace.

I am worried about the kids we deal with and know about. They are the kids who like the north. They are the ones who say: "Toronto? You can have it. Who needs it?" They are not all fishermen and hunters running around and that

kind of thing. There are really bright kids up here who want to develop industry and so on, and many of them are the learning-disabled that Mrs. Averill mentioned. They are at that age now, so we want to keep our people up here.

I think that is it for now. I really appreciate your time. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We really appreciate your presentation. Just before we go to Mr. Adams for a question, I have a couple of comments of my own. You have obviously talked from the disabled point of view, but many of the comments you have made are true of the bureaucracy overall.

Mrs. Averill made the comment that the administration should be supporting, not suppressing. I think when you said those words, every member echoed a hearty "amen," because we have found that all too often. Obviously, with the disabled and those with learning disabilities, you find it compounded and even more frustrating, but we find that all over.

A number of the points you have made were also made when we were in Sudbury. In fact, they are almost identical. Obviously, there is quite a unanimity on some of the needs of the north that are not being met. I think you would be surprised that we are finding the same thing echoed in the south about the lack of communication and the fact that they need more information. Your recommendation 25, which was made by your parent body in Toronto, is true of so many organizations. We just do not have the communication. People do not know where to go for help. We are certainly hoping there are some improvements in that area.

1600

Mr. Adams: I read both briefs very carefully and I appreciate the trouble you have gone to to prepare them. My question is fairly factual. In my own riding, there are roughly 600 or 700 native students. Our learning disabilities group there finds they are disproportionately represented among their clients. What sort of percentage of native students do you work with?

Mrs. Tothill: It is just that Mrs. Averill works with the adults who do not fit. The education system of Ontario really does not do a lot for the learning disabled adult. That is why we went in terms of the correspondence because you want to get a real grade 12 or a real grade 13. We leave it up to the schools. We will advocate on the part of the parent or the adult, but as to asking, "Do we deal with the native people?"

Mr. Adams: Do the adults include native people?

Mrs. Tothill: Not yet.

Mrs. Averill: I think they are too shy to come forward. We call our work underground work. We keep a low profile and let them know quietly what we are doing, because some of these people are so upset about having a learning disability and find it very difficult to say that they cover it. Then there are some of the stories they tell you. If they go to the bank and need some help with filling out a withdrawal slip, they will say to the teller: "Oh, I left my glasses at home. Could you fill this out for me?" They will go to the supermarket and smell the meat to tell the difference—things that would never even enter our heads. I think there is a shyness there, but our doors are open to anybody.

Mrs. Tothill: I think you were questioning more the relationship of the native situation?

Mr. Adams: It was just that you mentioned northwestern Ontario was different.

Mrs. Tothill: Yes.

Mr. Adams: In my case, that is only two or three per cent of the students. In your case, it is a much higher per cent of the students and adults. I thought that was one of the special features and that is why I asked.

Mrs. Tothill: As to how we work through as far as the native people are concerned, we are in contact or the leaders will contact us or a native teacher will contact us.

Mrs. Averill: We had one the other day. They contacted us.

Mrs. Tothill: We try to get it through that way. Okay?

Mr. Adams: That is fine.

Madam Chairman: I would like to thank you, Mrs. Averill and Mrs. Tothill, for taking the time and effort to come and make a contribution to our committee today.

Mrs. Averill: I think you certainly made us feel much better when you said it was being recognized all over the province.

Madam Chairman: Yes. Some areas obviously have a much greater problem because distance comes into it as well as all the other factors, but we are finding the same thing is being echoed, particularly with exceptional students. There is a communication problem and parents do not always know where to go. I think it is slowly improving, but it is going to take time.

Mrs. Averill: There is one point, though, that troubles us. Literacy groups are springing up all over and we hear these reports that one in four Canadians is not able to communicate to get good

jobs. The point that really worries us is that in the literacy groups we have wonderful volunteers coming forward, but we are still getting their students because the people within the literacy group do not understand the learning-disabled. That is troubling us very much. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Our next delegation today is from Lakehead University. Will you come forward, please. Good afternoon and welcome to our committee. We are very pleased that you are going to make a presentation to us today. Mr. Adams has told us that he is an old friend and I think he is looking forward to renewing his acquaintance.

Mr. Dietsch: Not on our time.

Mr. Adams: I did not say that. Afterwards.

Madam Chairman: We will ensure that Mr. Adams's questions are brief. As you know Mr. Adams, you will know that is highly unusual.

Mr. Weller, will you start by introducing the members of your panel to us for the purposes of electronic Hansard? We have a half-hour for your presentation and we are hoping at least part of that will be reserved for questions from the members.

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY

Mr. Weller: Okay. I will try to leave quite a lot of time for questions. My name is Geoffrey Weller. I am the vice-president, academic, at Lakehead University. On my right is Rod McLeod, who is the dean of the faculty of education, and on my left, Dianne Common, who is the dean of professional studies at the university. I will just say a few words about our brief and then I will ask the others if they want to add any comments and then we will go to questions.

The brief was inspired in part by a two-year study of northern Ontario small secondary schools for the Ministry of Education by three of the faculty members in the school of education—and one of them was Dr. McLeod—and from information and opinion arising from a general familiarity of university faculty with education and school systems. It is, of course, of interest to us, the nature of people we take into our institutions.

I would like to begin by saying we endorse the general statement submitted to the select committee by the Council of Ontario Universities. We would like to underscore the need for quality schooling, which enhances the development of students' abilities and skills in both literacy and numeracy. While we very much encourage great emphasis on basic skills, we think that must not

be done in any particularly blind fashion. There must be a great emphasis also on developing critical and creative thinking within that context. If students are to become masters of their language and be able to embark upon continued formal and informal lifelong learning, as we say, they must have not only the basic skills but this ability to be critical and to be creative.

In terms of the four areas that you are looking at, in terms of streaming, we think that complicated streaming may have more disadvantages than advantages for the students. It seems to militate against the exploratory nature of these years as espoused by OSIS and too early streaming does not really help the students. A strong differentiation before students have had any secondary school experiences reduces the opportunities for them to take advantage of their maturation and experience, we argue, in the early secondary school years to guide their education and early career decision-making. We think differentiation of students should be quite limited in grades 9 and 10 with relatively easy transfers between levels and across programs and that more substantial differentiation should probably only occur in later grades, grades 11 and 12.

We are also very concerned with the problems of small schools in the region, northwestern Ontario being a region of quite a lot of small towns. As you are probably aware, roughly half of the population of this region is in the city of Thunder Bay and the other half scattered in a variety of very small centres. There are lots of concerns in those centres, which relate largely to having a small number of students but a lot of differentiation in terms of levels and subject matters. It is difficult to get appropriate breadth sometimes and, indeed, sometimes depth.

The university supports in general the organization of intermediate and senior divisions as described in OSIS, but does draw attention to the difficulties that small and remote schools in our region have in accommodating the organizational principles more suited to larger and more centralized schools found elsewhere in the province.

We argue too that there were good reasons for abandoning grade promotions; we think they are still valid. The opportunity for students to advance as they achieve a reasonable degree of competence in the subject and the positive effects of small measures of success are sufficient justification, we think, for continuing the practice of the credit system and subject promotion.

Essentially, we have no strong feelings regarding the semestering of schools.

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We would like to draw the committee's attention to the fact that the number of people who enter post-secondary education from this region is much lower than it is for other areas of the province. There is a much lower participation rate in northwestern Ontario. Although I am sure there is no direct relationship, we think this must have something to do with the level of funding currently allocated to small, remote high schools. We think there should be a real examination of the adequacy of the level of funding for those schools in an attempt to address this discrepancy in the participation rates by region around the province.

Another thing that concerns us is that over the years we have had to introduce a number of remedial courses in basic English and mathematics. We have recently—in fact, just this term—established a learning assistance centre, which is not necessarily to help the students just in some of the basic skills in which, unfortunately, we occasionally find them deficient, but to assist them, if you like, in the process of learning and good study habits and things of this kind. I suppose our only comment there is that we find it a little distressing that we have to do that. It leads to an allocation of funds within our institution which, in a sense, we would rather not have to do, but since we do have to do it, we are quite prepared to do so. I will leave it at that. Dr. Common, do you want to add anything?

Dr. Common: Not at this time.

Dr. McLeod: There is only one item at the very end that I would underscore and that is the fact that there really is a need across the region for support for professional development of the teachers who are out there in small remote communities where numbers often do not warrant the mounting of regular graduate or additional qualification courses. The strength of the educational system is in large degree measured by the strength of the professional staff, whether they are classroom teachers or administrators.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. We will go directly to members' questions. We will start off with Mr. Adams, followed by Mr. Johnston.

Mr. Adams: Geoff, how are you?

Mr. Weller: Fine, thank you.

Mr. Adams: It is usually said that the universities are the most conservative part of the education system. I think there is some truth in that, particularly when the universities look at other parts of the system. I actually think there is some sign of that in your brief, but this morning

we heard—and the fact of your being here suggests—that Lakehead is more progressive with respect to the rest of the system than the other universities. This morning it was suggested, for example, that you were one of the relatively few universities that have adjusted to the semester system. I think this is excellent. I think the university's involvement with schools, particularly small schools, is very praiseworthy and something the other universities might well look at.

Can you give us now the reference to the study of these small schools or can you give it to us later for the record?

Dr. McLeod: You are asking for the title? It is a long and convoluted one. I would be glad to pull it out for you.

Mr. Adams: If you could let us have it, I think it would be very useful.

With regard to these small schools and what the university can do for them, because I think you are trying to do something now, what are you doing, for example, in the way of distance education and how is that helping teachers and students in these small schools?

Mr. Weller: I think I will let Rod answer that.

Dr. McLeod: The distance education at this time in the school of education is primarily development because, while distance education has been in place in arts and science and probably a bit more in arts, we are developing programs. That is expensive; it is costly. At this point, we are able to do so because we have funding from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to develop four courses. We hope to develop other courses. The university is offering a number of courses that have been acquired and prepared for distance delivery, offering them in the arts area. As well, Dr. Common, we have the nursing program.

Dr. Common: That is correct.

Dr. McLeod: That is also in a development phase, but it is in the early stages of implementation.

Mr. Weller: We have received fairly significant funding recently through the Contact North initiative for distance education and we hope we will be able to use that to great effect, but it takes a little while to get the program up and running.

In relation to semestering, as I say, we really have no strong view on that. I guess from our point of view as long as there is an element of predictability, we are happy to adjust accordingly. We do have quite a number of courses starting up in what we call the February semester and they

are intended to give the students who come out after the first semester a kick start, with three courses and then two courses, spring and summer so that, come September, they can enter the regular year.

Mr. Adams: It was described to us this morning. I was hoping to give you a chance to get on the record something about the distance end. That was all. I know about the nursing program.

Do you have anything like the high school extension program at Memorial University of Newfoundland, which is where faculty go around, not in teacher training contacts, but actually go to high schools and do some teaching and encourage professional development?

Dr. McLeod: We have some faculty members who do that informally. It is not a formal program, but we have faculty members who maintain the linkages with the system by going out and working with teachers in their classrooms, so that we can facilitate the placement of our student teachers. It is an informal arrangement, not a formal one.

Mr. Weller: We do have also informal contacts between certain departments and teachers in the region. The geography department and the mathematics department have quite extensive contacts, formal and informal and often quite social.

Mr. Adams: Again, I think it is extremely important, particularly in this sort of situation—and I think it is true generally, actually—that the university be very well tied in with the schools because of the professional development needs in these small communities.

Dr. Common: A very special contact that we have, that perhaps is unique, is our school of business administration with the teachers of English, because there is a language proficiency test in our school of business administration before the students can advance to the second year of study. That has been a very close working relationship for the last few years.

Madam Chairman: Just before we go on, we have questions from Mr. Villeneuve and also from Mr. Mahoney. I have just received some information concerning that study on small secondary schools in northern Ontario. Apparently, it has not actually been released by the ministry yet. It was under contract by the ministry.

I am sure we can get the results for members once it is released. We will certainly make every effort to get that to the members of the committee at a later date.

Dr. McLeod: I took the liberty of checking last day with the research branch. They indicated that it was at printing, but it will be some time before it returns.

Madam Chairman: We, therefore, are very optimistic about anticipating that report in the near future then.

Mr. Villeneuve: Lakehead University is probably in a unique situation to analyse some of the students as they come in from smaller and larger schools from the north and from other areas. What would your experiences have been with the semestered as opposed to nonsemestered students who continued their education at Lakehead? Could you comment on that?

Mr. Weller: My experience is that, if anything, I think the difference is that the students who have come in under the semestered system so far have probably been somewhat better, but I am not sure if that is simply because of the structure. It is just that they are perhaps the ones who had a little more initiative or wanted to do things in a somewhat different way. I do not know.

Certainly, those whom we get in our February semester sessions, in our experience, have done really quite well. They have been able to pick up courses in a compressed period. They go essentially every day of the week and get three full courses between February and just after the end of our regular term. Then they take two in the summer. That is quite a concentrated period. Our records indicate that they do just as well as other students in those courses.

Mr. Villeneuve: So special motivation may be a good portion of the results that you have just conveyed?

Mr. Weller: They are a relatively small group now. If it becomes larger, I do not know what—

Mr. Villeneuve: They would be the so-called four-and-a-half-year people now?

Mr. Weller: Basically, yes.

Mr. Villeneuve: Further on that, and I do not want to get parochial—

Madam Chairman: Go ahead.

Mr. Villeneuve: We will get parochial, the north versus other areas. We know you have different problems here in the north, different situations that must be faced and different backgrounds of students who come to you. You have commented on your northern students as opposed to the non-northern students who come to Lakehead and the quality of their knowledge level as you receive them.

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Mr. Weller: Here we are getting in way over our heads. I think it is a very valid question, but it is very difficult to answer in a proper or systematic way. You may be able to give it a more technical gloss, but we would probably have to answer in a somewhat impressionistic way.

My own impression is that this is based, not on my position or anything like that, but just having taught here since 1971, is that there is a difference in the degree of what I guess would go by the word "sophistication," a difference in assurance and perhaps some basic knowledge differential, especially from those who come from the more remote regions, especially, of course, when you are talking about native students. But that is simply a matter of exposure, I think more than anything else. I would say that there is no noticeable difference in the end product between the 50 per cent of the students that we get from southern Ontario and the roughly 50 per cent that we get from northern Ontario.

I do not think that it is a qualitative difference. I think you probably have, throughout any province, a standardized mix of innate, inherent ability. It is more exposure to things and assurance in certain situations, especially in types of seminar situations or things of this kind, but no great difference in product. Many of our students from the north have, of course, done extremely well in an international context, not just a provincial one.

Mr. Villeneuve: That is reassuring to this committee, in that we know you face a somewhat different world here, and the fact that you are able to say, because possibly some of your northern students have not had exposure or whatever experience away from the local environment, that they very quickly adapt and, as I believe I heard you say, by the time they may be one year into the system, there is very little difference, I think is a credit to the secondary institutions here and also to Lakehead.

Dr. McLeod: Madam Chairman, if I might add from our study and talking with the principals across the north, there was the observation that those students who did choose to come to Lakehead, did not find it quite as intimidating as going to some of the larger southern institutions. They were a little closer to home, it was not quite as impersonal. The support system was a little stronger in terms of the smallness of the institution. Their ability to stay and continue with their undergraduate

studies was enhanced by coming to the smaller, northern institution.

In education, of course, we do not receive our students from the high school; we receive them from the universities across the province. We have just over 50 per cent of our students who come from outside northwestern Ontario. Good students are good students, regardless of where they come from, and students who are not well prepared, are not well prepared regardless of their home base.

Mr. Dietsch: That is reassuring, since my son is up here.

Mr. Villeneuve: It is a good political answer too.

Dr. McLeod: It is also fact.

Madam Chairman: It is nice when politics mixes with realism.

Mr. Mahoney: It does not happen very often.

Mr. Villeneuve: You speak for the big city.

Mr. Mahoney: Sault Ste. Marie is my home town, so do not paint me with that brush.

I am curious that you do not take a stronger position on semestering and let me tell you why I am curious about it. It seems to me that much of what education is about is teaching people to learn as opposed to the specifics of what they learn, it is teaching them how to study, how to learn, how to deal with problems. It seems to me that a semestering setup requires a student to be more responsible for his or her own education in certain decisions and to work within a framework of a longer class period, more interaction perhaps with the teacher and colleagues over a longer period of time as opposed to the traditional 40-minute class where it is just jammed into it and a lot of it is rote.

It also seems to me that semestering is more in line with the philosophy of the university education where you have longer periods with a particular professor and an opportunity to interact and that kind of thing. It just strikes me that the semestering system versus the traditional system, from the point of view of the university community, should be preferred for those reasons.

Dr. McLeod: If I might respond initially, and I would certainly invite my colleagues to follow suit, at the outset of our brief we did indicate the need for literacy and numeracy. Of course the research has indicated that in the area of mathematics, semestering does not enhance academic achievement, particularly when students miss two semesters before picking up or continuing their mathematical studies. Teachers

in our studies indicated that in semestering much more time had to be spent at the beginning of a semester, picking up and making linkages to where students had left off in their previous studies.

Perhaps in defence of a middle-of-the-road stance at this point, I do not think the evidence is in yet as to what are the positive and negative effects of semestering. We have not had a large research base on which we can make definitive decisions.

Mr. Mahoney: Would your conclusion tend to lead toward a combination where the perhaps more traditional, repetitive number of instructions in mathematics, for example, might be more appropriate, but other subjects might be more appropriately dealt with in a semestered time frame, that type of thing?

Dr. McLeod: Certainly from the schools that we examined, and these are small schools, often partially isolated, they are remote schools, a single high school in a school system which is not the case here in Thunder Bay where we have a much larger, well-developed secondary system.

For those smaller schools, certainly for as many as used semestering, there was an equal number that did not use semestering. They had found alternative ways to try to address—I think what you are suggesting is that part of teaching and learning is sort of related to the content, related to the subject. Some subjects lend themselves well to semestering; other subjects suggest a more continuous learning pattern.

Certainly we found that many of the smaller schools had found modifications that tried to pick up the strength of a longer period, say in morning sessions and then a series of shorter periods that ran in the afternoon. Almost as many high schools as we studied out there, there was a variety of scheduling programs to try to adapt to meet the needs of the students.

Dr. Common: If I could just underscore that by adding that all of the major studies in the United States over the last 20 years or so underscore what Dr. McLeod is saying. I think the answer to semestering is those three words, "It all depends." It seems to depend on not only the nature of the subject matter or the curriculum content to be taught, but also the goals that the teachers and the students together wish to achieve, as well as the instructional approaches employed. So it is a very complex matter to simply try to answer whether, yes or no, semestering is appropriate in this case as opposed to another case.

Mr. Mahoney: You would then support the position of many of the associations and local boards that have said to leave that decision to the local level and not to mandate across the province.

Dr. Common: Yes, I would.

Dr. McLeod: I am not sure if you have had any student presentations, but from the viewpoint of the students, and in our study we not only spoke to principals, but also classroom teachers and students about the impact of the aspects of OSIS and their regard to the semestering program. Sometimes they found that they could not get courses in one year and they would have to take them later in another year. They found that somewhat disconcerting when the courses were not available so that they could continue their progress through the system. Alternate year scheduling, combined with semestering can complicate a student's life.

Madam Chairman: We certainly have heard those comments from various delegations that have come before us. It appears that some of the subjects, such as math, art, music, languages and, to a certain extent, science are the ones where the time lapse is the most detrimental. It appears in those subjects in particular that the student may suffer from the lack of continuity.

The other thing that we have heard about the semestering system is that if a student misses several weeks for some reason or another, even the ones in the academically advanced subjects have a great deal of difficulty catching up. For some of the students who have a greater difficulty, they are dead in the water; it is almost impossible. We have certainly heard both pros and cons, and it is quite an interesting subject.

I would like to very much thank the representatives from Lakehead University for coming before us and sharing your thoughts with us today.

Mr. Adams may now take some time on his own to mingle with the Lakehead delegation. We have very much enjoyed being in Thunder Bay today. I think it was an extremely productive day and we thank you.

Mr. Weller: Thank you for the opportunity.

Madam Chairman: Before members rush off, I will mention that the various flights we are booked out on tonight are all running on delayed schedules. Perhaps you could check with the clerk before rushing off.

The select committee on education stands adjourned until Monday morning in Toronto.

The committee adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

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Individual Presentation:

Cuthbert, Sean

From the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (Northwestern Ontario) and the Learning Disabilities Association of Thunder Bay:

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Averill, Margaret, Tutor, Learning-Disabled Adults, Learning Disabilities Association of Thunder Bay

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